Conceptual Clarity and Connections: Global Education and Teacher Candidates

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In this article, we have explored the experiences of students in a teacher education programme designed to promote the effective teaching of global education. Research to date indicates that, although interest is high among teacher candidates, they often lack confidence in their abilities to bring global education into their future classrooms. By examining their understanding of global education, we explored whether the complexity and conceptual breadth of global education contributes to this lack of confidence. Although there are similarities between teacher candidates' understandings of global education and those supported by teacher education programmes, teacher candidates tend to view global education in broader, more vague terms. By limiting the broad concept of global education and encouraging a progressively more nuanced understanding, teacher education programmes can better assist teacher candidates to implement their understanding of global education with confidence.

Key words: teacher education, global issues, development education, conceptual complexity

Les auteures se penchent sur la promotion de l'éducation planétaire dans un programme de formation à l'enseignement. Les données réunies jusqu'ici indiquent que, bien que les étudiants en pédagogie soient très intéressés par la question, ils ont souvent peu confiance dans leur aptitude à traiter de l'éducation planétaire dans leurs salles de classe futures. Les auteures se sont demandé si la complexité et l'envergure de l'éducation planétaire contribuent à ce manque d'assurance ; pour ce faire, elles ont examiné la conception qu'ont ces étudiants en pédagogie de l'éducation planétaire. Bien qu'il y ait des similitudes entre la compréhension de l'éducation planétaire chez les étudiants en pédagogie et dans les programmes de formation à l'enseignement, les futurs enseignants ont tendance à considérer l'éducation planétaire en des termes plus vastes et plus vagues. En circonscrivant le concept de l'éducation planétaire et en en favorisant peu à peu une compréhension plus nuancée, les programmes de formation à l'enseignement peuvent mieux aider les étudiants en pédagogie à

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transposer avec confiance leur conception de l'éducation planétaire dans leurs salles de classe futures.

Mots clés : formation à l'enseignement, dossiers mondiaux, éducation pour le développement, complexité conceptuelle.

Conceptually, global education reaches broadly, allowing for depth and nuance, a term that conjures up a rich diversity of values, meanings, and definitions. This conceptual complexity, however, leaves room for confusion and uncertainty, making a universal, consistent understanding of global education virtually unattainable. Pike (2000) cites conceptual complexity and accompanying lack of clarity as significant issues facing global education programmes. For educators committed to the proliferation of global education, this lack of conceptual clarity must be addressed directly to ensure that the meaning of global education does not become diluted, and potentially ineffective. Teacher candidates arrive at teacher education programmes with diverse backgrounds and experiences; therefore they have distinct understandings, misunderstandings, and even a lack of awareness of value-laden concepts such as global issues. For global education programmes to connect with teacher candidates' knowledge and to be successfully implemented, programmes must be both conceptually clear and coherent.

In this article, we explore the experience of a teacher education programme to promote effective teaching of global education. The Project, *Developing a Global Perspective for Educators/Développement d'une perspective globale pour enseignants et enseignantes (DGPE/DPGEE)*, is a multifaceted initiative at the University of Ottawa, offering teacher candidates opportunities to explore global education through curricula, activities, and discussions. Although some teacher candidates in the past have actively participated in the Project's offerings, one study has indicated that they lack confidence in their abilities to bring global education into their future classrooms (McLean, Cook, & Crowe, 2008). As two members (one professor and one graduate student) of the Project's twelve-member management team, we were interested in exploring whether the complexity and conceptual breadth of the concept of global education resulted in confusion and thereby limited teacher candidates' understand-

ing of how to implement global education in the classroom. Because various members over six years have contributed in diverse ways to an understanding of global education within DGPE/DPGEE, we found it necessary to ascertain the Project's current definition of the concept. In this article, we have examined the conceptual clarity of DGPE/DPGEE's definition(s) of global education as expressed in the Project's public documents, and analyzed the (dis)connections between this definition and the knowledge of teacher candidates, as evidenced in questionnaires and focus groups. To understand better the connections between DGPE/DPGEE's conception of global education and that of teacher candidates, we investigated three questions. These questions have emerged both out of the literature and out of our own experience with DGPE/DPGEE.

1. What is the Project's conception(s) of global education?
2. What are the teacher candidates' conceptions of global education?
3. If there are conceptual connections and gaps between the two designated groups (the Project as one group and teacher candidates as another group), what are they?

We begin this article with an examination of the concept of global education and its relevance for curriculum. Second, we consider the literature surrounding conceptual clarity and conceptual harmony. Third, we present an explanation of the methodology of this study. Fourth, through systematic tracking and research, we offer evidence from the Project's documentation and from teacher candidates highlighting the conceptual connections and gaps between the two designated groups. Finally, we discuss how Faculties of Education can more effectively connect the concept of global education with teacher candidates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Global Education

Although there is widespread recognition in Canadian schools and at all levels of government of the importance of teaching from a global perspective (Goldstein & Selby, 2000; Mundy, Manion, Masemann, & Haggerty, 2007), decidedly less consensus occurs about what constitutes

global education (Case, 1999; Evans & Reynolds, 2005; Pike, 2000). A recent document, the *Guide to Infusing Global Education into the Curriculum*, created by the Global Education Network (a group of Canadian teachers, [2005]) to assist teachers in implementing global education curricula in schools, broadly declares that global education is a "lens (or perspective) through which material on the curriculum is viewed" (p. 4). Likewise, Mundy et al.'s (2007) comprehensive study of global education programs across districts in six Canadian provinces and one territory defines global education as "any effort to introduce international issues in the classroom" (p. 7). Both are general statements, entry points for more refined definitions of global education; they both represent ideas to which proponents of global education subscribe. However, if one moves slightly beyond these imprecise definitions, consensus begins to erode.

Attempting to make sense of the varied understandings of global education, Mundy et al. (2007) drew from several key researchers, scholars, and international organizations (Anderson, 1977; Evans & Reynolds, 2005; Pike & Selby, 1988; and others), to devise a set of six "orientations" that they deemed to be common in many formal definitions of global education. Their "composite ideal" includes (a) a view of the world as one system, (b) commitment to the idea of basic human rights, (c) recognition of the importance of intercultural understanding and tol-erance for differences (d) belief in the efficacy of individual action, (e) commitment to child-centred or progressive pedagogy, and (f) awareness of environmental issues (p. 9). Although this idealized vision is helpful to create a common language and understanding of global education among theorists, it does not necessarily translate into more clarity for educators or represent the "lived definition" of global education found in schools.

Definitions of global education, both theoretical and practical, have implications for implementation. Pike (2000) discusses a continuum of beliefs on global education, with one end representing the conviction that global education serves to equip students to perform better in the global marketplace, and the other extreme denoting a transformative vision of schooling focused on global social justice. Therefore, the term "global education," Pike argues, can serve to shelter ideologically oppo-

site positions, leading to dissimilar and possibly conflicting classroom practices.

Conceptual Clarity. Given the range of values and ideologies housed within the term global education, not surprisingly, it generates imprecise definitions. Pike (2000) raises the argument that greater conceptual clarity could benefit both the implementation and the promotion of global education. Particularly significant for our research of teacher candidates, Starr and Nelson (1993), who surveyed graduate students in the United States and Canada, found that those teachers who were most likely to promote a global perspective could best define global education. Challenges aside, it appears that refining a theoretical definition of global education heightens the possibility of translating theory into reality.

To understand concepts such as global education, Sears and Hughes (1996) assert that identifying what informs definitions is more significant than crafting an actual definition. Moreover, Pike (1996) proposes the idea that diverse and imprecise perspectives are "not antithetical to some central tenets within global education" (p. 8) and continues the discussion in 2000 by questioning the feasibility of universal clarity (Pike, 2000). Nevertheless, restricting the term, at least partially, through interpretation is necessary to prevent it from becoming what Komisar and McClellan (1961) describe as a "systematically ambiguous" and "meaningless" educational slogan (p. 200). They propose that educational slogans left uninterpreted could result in abuses, for example, educators accused of failing to provide students with a global education, although no official criterion for success exists. This suggestion that interpretation, although not rigid definition, of global education makes the term meaningful, reaffirms for us the need to explore the level of clarity contained in DGPE/DPGEE's interpretation of the term.

Lacking a universal understanding of global education, educators are called to profound reflection on their own approaches and the implications inherent for their classrooms (Evans, 2006). Through our research, we explore the depth to which this reflection occurred both with teacher candidates and within the Project, which was designed to encourage teacher candidates in their global education pursuits.

Conceptual Harmony. Darling (2001), exploring a cohort option in a teacher education programme based on the idea of building a commun-

ity of inquiry, illuminates several conceptual harmony issues in reference to teacher candidates. In her programme, which is particularly relevant for our study, Darling found different interpretations of the concept of community. Instructors viewed community as a group to foster critical thinking, honesty, and reflection; conversely, teacher candidates conceptualized community as supportive, therapeutic, and safe. Despite the instructors' belief that the purpose of the community of inquiry had been clearly communicated to teacher candidates, Darling observed that the programme's conception collided with a "far more powerful conception of community that was held by our students and unwittingly supported by some of our own practices" (p. 11). The disconnect between the two groups impeded the realization of the programme's goals. Darling concludes by questioning whether the tension between the programme's conception and the teacher candidates' conception was necessarily destructive or whether it could be turned into a potentially creative tension.

Although teacher candidates are in a formative period of their professional development, they do not arrive at a teacher education programme as blank canvases; teacher candidates, as evidenced in Darling's (2001) research, hold a set of well-defined beliefs that influence their connectivity to the knowledge and skills with which they engage through the programme. For global education programmes to meet their objectives, they require a certain degree of harmony between a programme's understandings of global education and those of teacher candidates. Yet, given the multiplicity of understandings along the continuum of global education discussed by Pike (2000), that harmony is clearly not assured.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to discover and describe how the DGPE/DPGEE Project conceptualizes and expresses global education in the teacher education programme at the University of Ottawa, as well as how teacher candidates who come into contact with the DGPE/DPGEE Project conceptualize and express global education. This study is bounded by place (the teacher education programme) and time (September 2007-April 2008).

To enter into an exploration of the Project and the teacher candidates' understandings of global education, we proposed the three research questions mentioned earlier.

1. What is the Project's conception(s) of global education?
2. What are the teacher candidates' conceptions of global education?
3. If there are conceptual connections and gaps between the two designated groups, what are they?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

For this study, we draw on the theories, theoretical frameworks, and literature of global education, and of conceptual clarity and conceptual harmony within the education system. We return to Mundy et al.'s (2007) model as the "composite ideal" of global education, which we described earlier in this article. Not presuming to suggest that this model represents the totality of belief in Canadian schools on global education, we propose it as an ideal type against which to measure others (Abrams, 1982; Sears & Hughes, 1996). The model is appropriate for our study of teacher candidates being prepared to teach in Ontario because it was used in a cross-Canada study with teachers who work in similar educational environments as those for whom the Project is preparing its teacher candidates. For us, the model, with some modifications, serves as a benchmark against which we can compare and contrast the conceptions of both the teacher candidates and the Project. The similarities and differences between the two conceptions, when analyzed in such a manner, reveal the existence of conceptual harmony and conceptual disconnect.

METHOD

Participants and Context

Now in its sixth year of operation, *Developing a Global Perspective for Educators/Développement d'une perspective globale pour enseignants et enseignantes Programme* (DGPE/DPGEE) is a year-long offering in a teacher education programme for teacher candidates interested in global education. This multifaceted initiative "promote[s] the knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators to work in an increasingly diverse and global com-

munity" (Faculty of Education [University of Ottawa], n. d.). Among the multiple activities available for teacher candidates are weekend retreats, a Fall Institute, film festivals, resource fairs, discussion groups, Global Education and Social Justice elective courses, a Global Perspectives Web site, a variety of outreach projects in local schools, and in-class workshops. The Project, funded through the Global Classroom Initiative of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is supported by a broad spectrum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local educational communities, and community activists, all of whom present workshops, provide educational materials, and speak at conferences. Seven faculty members from the Faculty of Education serve as the management team for the Project, supported by five graduate students who assist in implementing events and writing reports.

With the majority of its activities offered as options to all teacher candidates, DPGE/DPGEE has the potential to interact with 900 teacher candidates (in both official languages) enrolled in the teacher education programme. Teacher candidates may choose to engage with the Project only once, several times, or throughout the year for all offered activities. Although DPGE/DPGEE estimates that there were over 1,000 individual connections made with teacher candidates during the academic year 2006-2007, it is not possible for the Project to comment on the actual number of teacher candidates reached, nor the amount of exposure to the Project that each teacher candidate received (CIDA proposal, 2007).

The majority of teacher candidates at the Faculty of Education are "white" and "able-bodied," although the population of "visible minorities" has increased in recent years. Some candidates are passionate about global education; others have little interest. McLean, Cook, and Crowe (2008) found that many candidates were somewhere in between, possessing adequate knowledge and interest, but "concluding that they have little scope to incorporate this area into their own teaching" (p. 56).

Given the multiple activities offered and the diversity of teacher candidates who connect with the Project through one or more events, DPGE/DPGEE offers numerous opportunities for our research into conceptual clarity and conceptual harmony among the global education events. We sought, through questionnaires and focus groups, to understand the meaning teacher candidates attached to global education when

they entered the programme. Because completing questionnaires and attending focus groups was optional, we have limited our data to those participants who selected to respond. We received 58 completed questionnaires (10 male and 48 female) and interacted with 10 participants over three focus group sessions. In the focus groups, two participants were male and eight female, a gender ratio generally similar to most teacher-education programmes in North America.

Data Collection

Over the period of one school year, we engaged with such sources as teacher candidate questionnaires, Project brochures, Project Web sites, Social Justice and Global Education course outlines from two Faculty members, our own observation journals, and verbal and written commentary from members of the Project management team, and we conducted document analysis, observations, and focus groups.

DGPE/DPGEE. As mentioned earlier, because of the varied leadership of the DGPE/DPGEE over its six years, no clear definition of global education has emerged. To obtain an understanding of the Project's conception of global education, we examined 10 documents. These documents were public, available to either the entire teacher education student body through, for example, the Faculty of Education Web page on the University of Ottawa Web site, or to a select group of teacher candidates, such as course outlines for Social Justice and Global Education courses. We chose a selection of available documents to represent the public promotion of the full range of activities presented by DGPE/DPGEE, for example, the Fall Institute, the film series, and course offerings. In addition to public documents such as the brochure and Web page outlining the Project's mandate and activities, specific resources used in Global Education courses such as an assessment tool and a textbook also provided data on the Project's expressed concept of global education.

Some of the Project's 10 documents that we chose contained direct definitions of global education; others revealed an understanding of global education through the particular concepts given priority. By reviewing DGPE/DPGEE's 10 documents, we were able to understand the structure of the Project and ascertain an understanding of global educa-

tion. Due to the fact that the limitations of analyzing documents as separate from action are numerous, we do not claim to be able to accurately represent the Project's lived definition of global education, simply its documented and publicly-expressed definition. The publicly-expressed definition, however, is significant because one of DGPE/DPGEE's various documents is likely to be the first point of connection for many of the teacher candidates. To enhance the trustworthiness of our document analysis, we shared our findings with some of the originators of the documents involved in our study, and included their commentary in the analysis.

Teacher Candidates. Although teacher candidates are surveyed through questionnaires at most DGPE/DPGEE events, we chose to use the data obtained through questionnaires from the first event of the school year, the Fall Institute. The data gathered from teacher candidates at this event offered us a glimpse into the initial perceptions of global education that teacher candidates brought into the programme, relatively uninfluenced by the conceptions of the Project itself. We hoped to clearly identify the separate, unmodified understandings of the teacher candidates to analyze the conceptual harmony between the Project and the teacher candidates upon their first meeting.

We derived data collected from the Fall Institute from two separate questions on the DGPE/DPGEE questionnaire. The first question read: "Do you have any previous experience with peace, global education programs, non-governmental organizations or developing countries? If yes, elaborate." The second then queried: "In general, what does peace and global education mean for you?"

The first question is arguably a leading question, limiting the definition of global education by including in the wording of the question "peace," "non-governmental organizations," and "developing countries." It could even be suggested that the question reveals more about the Project's conception of the term than the answers may reveal about the teacher candidates' conceptions. Although the term "global education programs" is surrounded by other terms in the question, "global education programs" is still left largely undefined; the information that teacher candidates select to include as "previous experience" reflects their understandings of the concept.

The first question served as a proxy for the second, "What does peace and global education mean for you?" Although this second question allowed teacher candidates to answer candidly, it is complicated by the pairing of the term "peace" with "global education." Although peace education and global education share many of the same values, peace education is a complex, value-laden concept in and of itself (Bickmore, 2005; Cook, 2008; Reardon, 1988). DGPE/DPGEE's focus is clearly on global education, although the Project applies the combined title "peace and global education" with little distinction in some of its offerings and publications, for example, the questionnaire. The addition of "peace" into the question simply serves to compound the complexity of conceptual definition, and suggests that peace may be a key component of DGPE/DPGEE's definition of global education.

The limitation of analyzing teacher candidate responses to questionnaires as separate from their actual practice arises and, similar to our analysis of the Project, we do not claim to rely on the responses to accurately represent the teacher candidates' multiple lived definitions of global education. Therefore, later in the academic year, once the data were analyzed, we organized three focus groups with teacher candidates who had participated in at least one of the Project's events to pursue themes emerging from the questionnaires (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 1994). The focus groups were small (three or four participants), lasted from 40-60 minutes, and focused on six questions. Although not expecting these small groups to embody the whole population of teacher candidates interested in global education, the focus groups offered an opportunity to explore the topic in more depth (Dean, 1994).

We used the conversations to probe deeper into teacher candidates' initial understandings of global education, and any changes they identified in their conceptions that may have occurred during their year interacting with DGPE/DPGEE. Among others, questions included

1. "How would you describe peace and global education?"
2. "How has your year so far changed your idea of global education?"
3. "How has your understanding of peace and global education impacted how you see your role as a teacher?"

We utilized the findings from the focus groups to illuminate the effect that any perceived lack of conceptual clarity and/or harmony had on teacher candidates' confidence in implementing global education.

Data Analysis

Once the data concerning the conceptions of global education of the two groups (the Project's documents as one group and teacher candidates' written responses to questionnaires as another group) had been gathered, we found it necessary to locate a framework with which to analyze data from both groups.

For this framework, we turned to the model created by Mundy et al. (2007) as the "composite ideal" of global education. We modified the model iteratively, moving between the model and the data to determine the most relevant categories for the study. The six original orientations that Mundy et al. proposed remained intact, with slight differences in name and expanded definitions. We further modified the model to include subcategories that were tracked separately.

The following are the final six categories, along with their subcategories written in parenthesis:[1]

(1) global interdependence (a view of the world as one system, focus on development issues, global citizenship, other);
(2) human rights (commitment to basic human rights, racial equity, gender equity, other);
(3) interpersonal and intercultural communication and cooperation (importance of intercultural understanding and tolerance of differences, conflict resolution, peace education, other);
(4) critical pedagogy (commitment to child-centred pedagogy, belief in holistic or integrative education, making education meaningful and engaging, other);
(5) individual action (belief in the efficacy of individual action, encourage critical thinking, help others through charity and fundraising, other); and

[1] The first subcategory of each section is often taken directly from Mundy et al.'s (2007) definitions.

(6) environmental awareness (understanding of environmental issues, sense of personal responsibility to planet, commitment to planetary sustainability, other).

We employed the model first with the teacher candidate data. Reading through each individual participant's questionnaire, we awarded their responses for each of the six categories either a 0 (no mention), 1 (mention), or 2 (multiple mentions or elaboration). This coding allowed us to determine which aspects of the global education definition the teacher candidates' responses emphasized both individually and, once tallied, collectively. We used the same process with each of the Project's 10 documents, providing a sense of which aspects of the global education definition DGPE/DPGEE emphasized.

As mentioned above, we modified the model to include subcategories that were tracked separately. The subcategories emerged from a combination of Mundy et al.'s (2007) definitions and frequent responses in the data. For each participant response or document awarded a 2 (multiple mentions or elaboration of the category), we further broke down the data and assigned each subcategory a percentage reflecting the amount of references and examples given. This brought nuance back into the analysis and allowed for more meaningful comparisons to emerge.

Trustworthiness and Limitations

Although we have previously discussed the limitations of documentary analysis, we acknowledge a further limitation of the comparison of data sources. The documents analyzed to ascertain the Project's understanding of global education were mainly publicity materials, often written by committee members, and produced to inform or connect with teacher candidates. The data obtained from teacher candidate questionnaires, on the other hand, were spontaneous responses to questions, with little opportunity for teacher candidates to reflect significantly on the wording and meaning of their responses. Although it may seem problematic to compare such diverse data sources, we believe that the Project's documents, taken as a whole, and the teacher candidate responses, also taken as a whole, provide sufficient data to develop an understanding of both groups' conceptions of global education.

To ensure trustworthiness of our study, we employed a variety of sources and engaged in multiple methods of data gathering and analysis (i.e., document analysis, focus groups). In addition to the analysis of the Project's documents, we invited commentary from the originators of the documents and included their commentary in the final analysis. Similarly, to add meaning to the teacher candidates' questionnaires, we conducted focus groups on themes emerging from the responses.

As individuals who both plan and implement the activities of the DGPE/DPGEE, we are not operating as detached observers. Rather, as researchers, we are intensely interested in understanding how the DGPE/DPGEE is projecting itself, and how teacher candidates are connecting with it. Therefore, although we included in the analysis our own recorded observations of the Project and its participants, we also employed a trained research assistant to conduct the majority of the focus group sessions to maximize candid responses from teacher candidates. In our role as participant-researchers, we acknowledge our vested interest, yet also claim that this interest motivates us to collect and analyze our data in a critical manner. Additionally, all aspects of the study received approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board.

FINDINGS

1) What is the Project's conception(s) of global education?

After we coded the documents and tallied the results of the scoring assigned to each document, we found that no category of the global education model was clearly favoured. Because of the size and scope of the documents, one document frequently touched upon all six categories. Yet, a hierarchy of significance among them did emerge (see Figure 1). In its documentation, the Project bestows priority on interpersonal and intercultural communication and cooperation, followed closely by a focus on human rights. Environmental awareness arrives third, with global interdependence and individual action tied for fourth. Critical pedagogy achieved the final position.

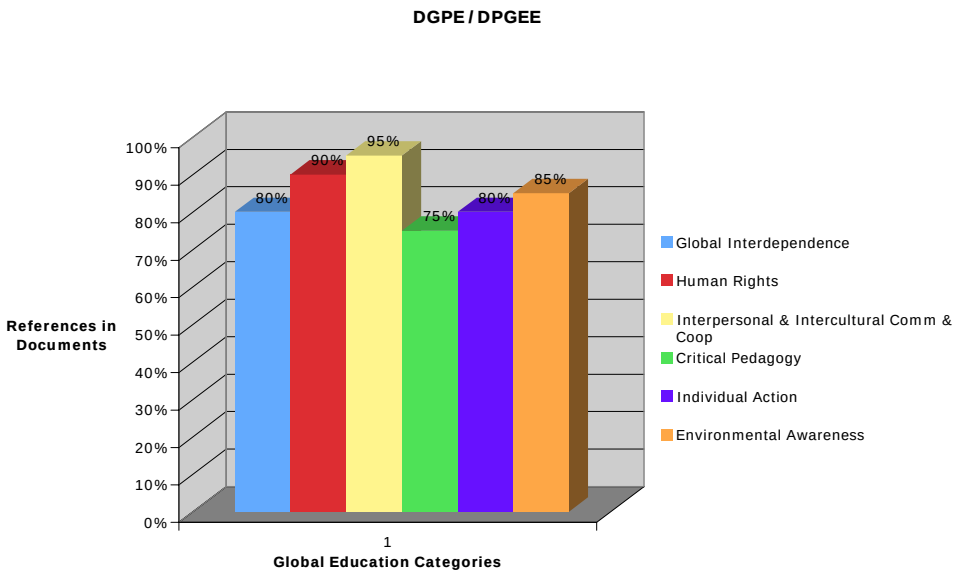

Figure 1. The understanding of global education, as derived from public documents of the Project (DGPE/DPGEE).

The subcategories, however, provide more nuanced and meaningful findings. For example, the category with the most references, interpersonal and intercultural communication and cooperation, contains slightly more references to the importance of intercultural understanding and tolerance of differences (37%) compared to peace education (33%). It appears that the use of "peace" in the title of some of the Project's offerings is not coincidental, but reflective of DGPE/DPGEE's understanding of global education. Only 15 per cent of the references mention conflict resolution, with slightly fewer (14%) referring to other aspects of the category such as character education and empathy education. Although this evidence provides us with a greater understanding of the aspects of global education that the Project prioritizes, through comparing these numbers to the teacher candidate data, as is shown in an upcoming section, the numbers receive added meaning.

As alluded to earlier, an analysis of the different titles of the DGPE/DPGEE documents reveals an issue of clarity. Although the Project itself is titled *Developing a Global Perspective for Educators,* which is reiterated in four of the documents, the Project also offers activities under the categories of social justice and global education, peace and global education, peace and global citizenship, peace and global issues, and, simply, global education. Even the Web page on the Faculty of Education's Web site is not listed under "Developing a Global Perspective," but under the title, "Peace." Impacting this lack of clarity seems to be a reliance on several key NGOs for materials and workshops; 8 of the 10 documents surveyed refer to these partnerships. Because the NGOs have a wide variety of concentrations, they also use a variety of names for their offerings, which the Project uses. The various names employed by DGPE/DPGEE and associated concepts are obviously connected, but in a field imbued with conceptual confusion, the multiple titles could potentially compound that confusion.

2) What are the teacher candidates' conceptions of global education?

Given the larger sample of teacher candidate respondents compared to the number of Project documents, and given the fact that the teacher candidates responded as individuals, rather than as a collective, not surprisingly, the teacher candidates' results contained much more contrast than that of the Project (see figure 2). Global interdependence was the decisive conceptual leader for teacher candidates, with individual action and interpersonal and intercultural communication and cooperation coming in second and third, respectively. Human rights had a substantial number of references, placing it fourth. The references diminish significantly in number with environmental awareness finishing a weak fifth and comments related to critical pedagogy barely registering.

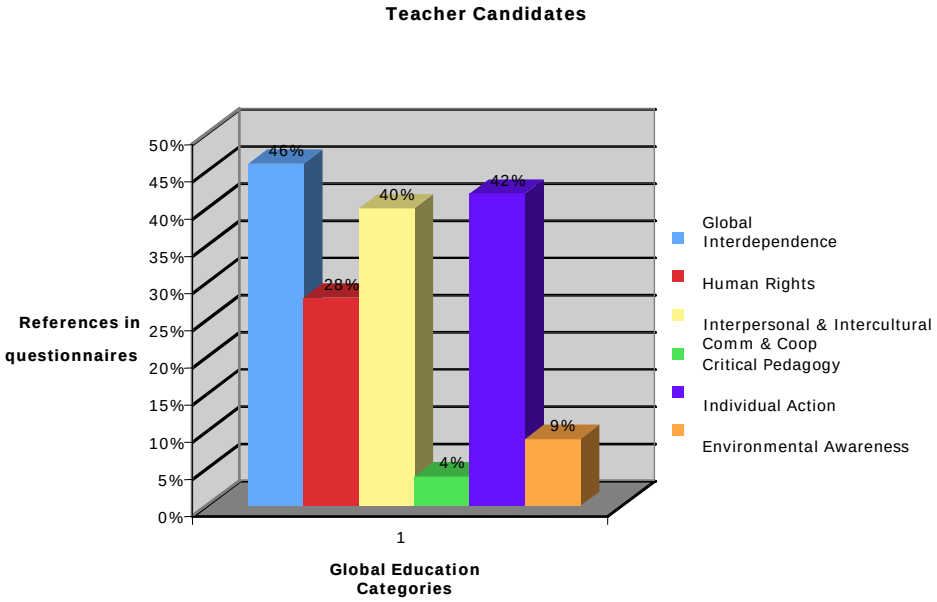

Figure 2. Teacher candidates' understanding of global education, as derived from questionnaires.

The subcategories afford the most meaning. For instance, in the most prolific category, global interdependence, teacher candidates refer to the view of the world as one system 62 per cent of the time, with the remainder of the references split almost equally between "other" aspects (most commonly "world issues" or "awareness of the world"), global development issues, and the idea of the global citizen. With global interdependence, as with all categories, teacher candidates tended to gravitate toward general definitions, rather than more nuanced understandings. Another category highlighting this trend is human rights. The majority of references (76%) focus on basic human rights, with the remainder again split relatively evenly between racial equity, gender equity, and other aspects, most commonly the right to education.

The findings obtained through the three focus groups assisted us to understand the teacher candidates' conceptions of global education.

Comments made by various focus group participants confirmed our sense that conceptual confusion might be hindering teacher candidates' ability to bring global education into the classroom. Amber, [2] for example, stated that global education was an "abstract thought" making it difficult to determine how to apply it in the classroom. Tina concurred with Amber, calling global education an "ambiguous term that I think we all have our own idea about what it means; it's not one thing." Ida went further, claiming that the term is "misleading" and is not understood unless "somebody tells you" its meaning. This meaning, however, would necessitate clarity on the part of that "somebody," such as DGPE/DPGEE.

The focus group participants mentioned all six aspects of global education as articulated in the model, with no individual dominant category. Interestingly, several participants expressed a sense that they had "evolved" in their understanding of global education through the year, growing from a general conception of "comparing Canada to other disadvantaged countries"(Tina) to a more nuanced view of the concept. One participant (Annie) voiced her desire for more "explicit" instruction on the concept and its implementation, yet continued her remarks with a reflection on how personally struggling with the concept allowed teacher candidates to teach global issues in "a way that was from the heart."

3) If there are conceptual connections and gaps between the two designated groups, what are they?

Looking at conceptual connections, we observed that both groups place high value on the category "interpersonal and intercultural communication and cooperation." For the Project, it ranks first, and falls to third place for the teacher candidates. Within the category, there is also harmony; the combined subcategories of intercultural understanding and peace education constitute 83 per cent of references for the teacher candidates and 71 per cent for the Project. Agreement clearly exists among both groups on the importance of interpersonal and intercultural understanding.

[2] All names used for focus group participants are pseudonyms.

Notably, however, there is less concord on the value of most other categories. Individual action is a case in point. It plays a strong role in the teacher candidates' conceptions of global education, yet ranks fourth in the view of the Project. Although both groups grant priority to the efficacy of individual action (65% for teacher candidates; 57% for DGPE/DPGEE), notable discrepancy occurred between the groups' next most referenced subcategories. Teacher candidates, in 18 per cent of references, placed value on helping others through charity and fundraising; the Project, in 23 per cent of the citations, gave preference to encouraging critical thinking. Because of the ideological difference between these two aspects of individual action, there is clearly a conceptual discord requiring attention. Although critical thinking is more highly favoured by DGPE/DPGEE, the Project does not dismiss helping others through charity and fundraising; the Project mentions this subcategory to almost the same degree as the teacher candidates (just under 18%).

Because the teacher candidates rated global interdependence as their first category, the conceptual disconnect found within this category is also worthy of illumination. This category fell to fourth place in the Project's conceptualization, with the most referenced subcategory (43%) being a view of the world as interconnected. For the teacher candidates, the view of the world as interconnected was also the decisive leader (62%), while development issues (11%), which were second for the Project (31%), tied for last place. Although development issues are valued in the Project's understanding of global education, they received limited consideration from the teacher candidates.

As anticipated, both conceptual connections and gaps emerged between the two designated groups. We can explain some of the gaps in terms of the analysis used. For instance, only 4 out of 58 teacher candidates mentioned topics related to critical pedagogy in the questionnaires. Understandably, pedagogy would not play a role in the participants' response to the question regarding their background and, given the limited space to answer the question of conceptual meaning, was unlikely to appear in the second response either. Critical pedagogy, however, did figure prominently in the focus group discussions, thus corroborating our assumptions for its absence in the questionnaires. As we move into

further discussion, however, other more puzzling gaps allow us to locate the areas requiring additional exploration.

DISCUSSION

General to Nuance

We found that teacher candidates, in questionnaires at the beginning of their academic year, tended to conceptualize global education with generalized definitions such as "broad societal issues" or "understanding and acceptance of everyone in the world." The two categories with the least number of references (environmental awareness and progressive pedagogy) showed more specific understanding, but it is difficult to draw conclusions from these two categories because of the infrequency of response.

Participants in the focus groups relayed personal stories of evolving from general to more nuanced understandings of the concept as they interacted with DGPE/DPGEE throughout the academic year. One participant spoke of not "being in a place where I could accept [global education]" in September because she did not feel it was relevant to her and her teaching practice; by the end of the year she was a strong advocate of global education, yet sensed that she had missed earlier opportunities for growth.

Although requiring further study, the progression in understanding that the focus group participants articulated appears significant. One possible interpretation suggests that the Project may have assisted participants to craft a more nuanced understanding of global education through their interaction with the Project's offerings. A concept as complex as global education may need to be explored in a variety of ways before being understood; therefore, perhaps, clarity on the part of the Project may not be necessary or even advisable. Again, these are areas for further study.

Regardless, the management team for the Project should be cognizant of the prevalence of this conceptual evolution in teacher candidates. Perhaps it could structure its events to align with a similar evolution, offering generalized activities at the beginning of the academic year that contain more explicit definitions of global education, as well as being more consistent with naming of events and activities. Moving through

the year, the Project could gradually refine its offerings to be more specific and nuanced, encouraging teacher candidates to move from a place where they, as Bickmore (2005) suggests, "merely hope at a distance" (p. 173) to a deeper, engaged understanding. This conceptual evolution could, potentially, embody the creative tension Darling (2001) sought in her study of teacher candidates, teacher education programmes, and their conceptual collisions.

NGOs

The DGPE/DPGEE's partnerships with outside organizations are clearly a strong aspect of the Project, particularly partnerships with NGOs. Eight of the 10 documents surveyed referred to these partnerships, with reference to workshops offered, resources provided, and support for specific projects. Because several of the NGOs are involved in development work, these partnerships also serve to maintain the strong focus on development issues found in the Project's conception of global education. Although obviously beneficial for the Project, connecting global education to NGOs can produce conceptual confusion because many NGOs link their public education efforts to marketing and fundraising (Mundy et al., 2007). Although referenced in 80 per cent of the Project's documents, teacher candidates rarely connected NGOs to global education. Teacher candidates did, however, place some value (18%) on helping others through charity and fundraising which, according to Mundy et al., is antithetical to the goals of global education, often reinforcing an "us/them" perspective (p. 99). Although DGPE/DPGEE does not emphasize charity and fundraising in its documentation, the reliance on NGOs for teaching material and workshops could inadvertently reinforce some of the teacher candidates' charity-based conceptions of global education.

CONCLUSION

The concept of global education clearly defies definition, being interpreted instead through ideological orientations and approaches. To limit the broad concept is necessary so as not to allow global education to become a meaningless slogan. Global education programmes could connect more effectively with teacher candidates at the beginning of their aca-

demic year (when they are often overwhelmed with the daunting task of "becoming" teachers) by presenting a more explicit and cohesive conception of global education. By encouraging teacher candidates in their journey from general to nuanced understanding of global education, we hope that the conceptions will take root in teacher candidates, allowing them to implement their understandings of global education in their own classrooms with confidence and cognizance.

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