



*Enhancing the Human Experience of Learning with Technology:  
New challenges for research into digital, open, distance & networked education*

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**TEACHERS AND LEARNERS CHANGING ROLES IN A GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED  
ENVIRONMENT.**

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**Abstract**

This poster addresses the theme of Teachers and learners changing roles in a global technology-mediated environment.

Given the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is imperative to develop and implement strategies that mitigate its educational impact. Differences between school systems in a global context and their ability to design and implement appropriate educational responses can generate more learning opportunities around the world.

This poster presents some data and reflections resulting from an ongoing research on Global Education in a European School in an international context. For this purpose, a mixed research methodology was used, with the application of a closed answer questionnaire to students and a semi-structured interview with teachers.

Partial data on the perspectives of students and teachers regarding Global Education and some of the skills that this educational approach presupposes are analyzed.

The results, still provisional, of the research reveal that they are the international matrix of the school under study, promoting global education, with a strong anchor in intercultural competences. However, there are limitations in the use of digital technologies and the Internet in the school context that can compromise the full dynamization of this educational perspective.

**Key words:** Global Education; Global competences; Digital skills.

## **Introduction**

In the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the importance of formulating educational responses that are consistent with a crisis that introduces significant changes in learning opportunities worldwide is highlighted.

Taking into account the educational needs in a global context, it is up to the school to look for solutions and give appropriate responses to the characteristics of each school community, also at the technological and digital skills level. In this context, global education becomes one of the essential pillars in terms of educational decision-making and in the search for effective educational responses, through participatory strategies and methods, which refer to a change at the local level with a global influence.

Global competences, a concept linked to that of global education, point us to the ability to understand global interdependence. Its acquisition is fundamental for participation in a global society, focusing on promoting learning in an interdependent world, with an approach focused on building a more just and sustainable world (Reimers, 2013; Bourn, 2014). From the range of global skills, we highlight the importance of digital skills, as the absence of these skills triggers the impossibility of participating in a global, networked society (Castells, 2006).

## **Global Education and Digital Skills**

Global education stands out for its scope and interdisciplinary nature and brings together the agendas of different fields of education, providing context for broad curricular structures, with educational activities oriented to global scenarios. This perspective of education points to a common future, in a fairer and more sustainable world, with better living conditions for all, locally and globally.

Global education can play an important role in the creation of new methods where social movements and learning processes based on dialogue and cooperation, can modify the established rules of the global economy, restoring human dignity as a central value. This perspective of Education underlies a set of purposes that can help to align the curriculum with the real world, making it easier for teachers and students to better understand the relationship between what is learned at school and outside school (Silva, 2010; Silva 2019; Reimers, 2020).

Indeed, global competences refer to a learning of multiple, diverse spectrum, valuing the plural and the particular, with the purpose of promoting open and effective interactions with people of different origins, based on a shared respect for human dignity.

The idea of communication and information has been imposing itself according to its specificity and autonomy, and also as a central idea of social life, highlighting the role of global communications, from the press to the Internet (Cardoso, 2014: 4 ). Therefore, new concepts and new approaches have emerged, highlighting a trend of more participative social digital media, with an enhanced importance for new forms of communication, expression, living, learning and working. With a view to preparing people for a global multicultural and digital world, education promotes knowledge, skills and practices, of learning inside and outside schools. Thus, digital technologies are fundamental for the restructuring of most contemporary formal education environments, with the mission of supporting and encouraging active citizenship and self-expression in democratic societies (Gutiérrez & Tyner, 2012). Effectively, digital competence, generally understood as the ability to use digital technologies in the context of work, leisure and communication (From, 2017) is recognized as one of the essential competences for lifelong learning, being referenced by Unesco and the European Union, in documents of a strategic and political nature, associated with educational agents, namely students and teachers (Santos, Pedro, Azevedo, 2015: 27; Aires, Palmeiro & Pereda, 2019: 14).

## Empirical study

The empirical study we present results from a broader investigation that has objectives:

- Identify global education practices with students and teachers in a European school;
- Know the approaches used to stimulate learning among students from different cultures;
- Collect information on the influence of global competences in the development of global education.

In this study, it is intended to obtain possible answers to the question: What are the perspectives of students and teachers at a European School on Global Education?

## Research context and sample

The research takes place in a European School. It involves 154 students from Primary and Secondary Education and 4 teachers - 2 teachers from the primary cycle and 2 from the secondary cycle.

## Methodology: Information collection techniques

We opted for a mixed research methodology. For this purpose, a closed answer questionnaire was built and applied to students. The questionnaire consists of twenty questions, with Likert-type answer items, on a scale of 1 to 4, and some questions with a dichotomous scale “Yes” or “No”.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with teachers. For conducting the interviews, a guide was built based on two major blocks: Global education and global skills.

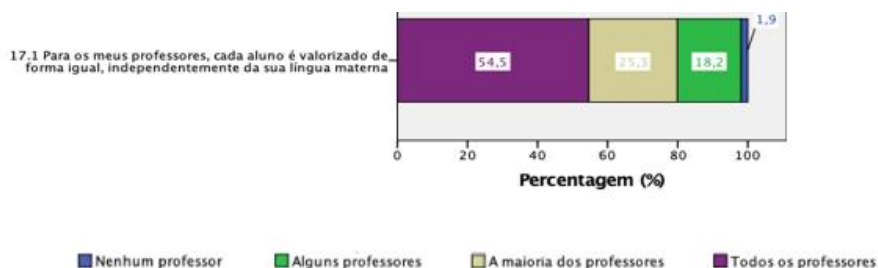
In this presentation we emphasize the categories: Global Education Initiatives and practices in School, Commitment to the planet, Participation in multicultural projects and Projects on the web.

## Data analysis and discussion

The data resulting from the questionnaires applied to students were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, using SPSS (Statistics Version 26). In turn, for the analysis of teachers' speeches, they resorted to qualitative content analysis (Bardin, 1977), with the support of Nvivo (version 11).

## Multicultural Education Practices

Multicultural Education at school starts from teachers' respect for cultural difference and diversity. Indeed, 79.8% of students consider that the majority of teachers value students equally, regardless of their cultural or linguistic origins:



## School and Commitment to the Planet

Commitment to people and the planet is also a dimension present in students' practices, especially in those attending secondary education. Almost all students (n = 143) belong to an environmental group or organization and more than half (67.5%) keep themselves informed about different events through social networks, namely Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

Relationships between variables	Chi-square	df	Value of p
Education level * I keep informed about different events through social networks	25,062	1	<0,001**

## Participation Multicultural Projects and Openness to Multicultural Experiences

Teachers, when asked about this issue, value above all the practices of global education at school and, in particular, participation in multicultural projects in network with other schools:

*We also have the BRUMUM project. I think this organization was an excellent idea. This project is through the European School of Brussels II, and at the moment, there are already fifteen countries participating. This is surely the major global education project. This project allows an exchange between several schools in Europe, in this case there are fifteen schools in contact. (E3)*

*Now, what is the "China Exchange"? It is an exchange that started to be promoted a few years ago, with the Director at the time, he was Irish. (...) It is to realize that the school is inserted in a community, in a neighborhood, and that it is necessary to make partnerships with everything that we have around us. And what we have here, is the Chinese Embassy. (...) until there was a time when he thought it would be interesting, both for our students and for young Chinese people. (E2)*

## Projects on the web

*The use of the Internet does not seem to be a priority for the four teachers. In fact, only two of these teachers highlight them, pointing out the tools they use and the virtualities they have:*

*Yes. We have "Teams", which is a kind of educational community, which is done at the class level. But we can create other groups. But this year I only have students of Portuguese 4, and since their Portuguese level is still very insipient, I haven't launched them yet. But I have my Latin students who already use it. It started now, is connected to the Office 365 Platform, and is very easy to access. (E2)*

## Final considerations

The European school under study allows us to conclude, still provisionally, that the international dimension of its educational project, the experiences of the teachers who teach there and the different socio-cultural contexts of the students who attend it are relevant elements for the promotion of Global Education and the competencies associated with it. Respect for diversity, commitment to people and the planet and participation in multicultural network projects are important areas in the global education practices promoted at this school.

Considering that digital skills and, in particular, Internet use skills, are part of the wide range of global skills, it appears, however, that this assumption does not seem to be a priority in the curricula and practices of these teachers. While students, especially older ones, turn to social networks to find out about global issues, the use of the Internet and the development of skills for its good use, this does not emerge as a priority in teachers' discourse.

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