TEACHERS REFLECTING ON TEACHING GLOBAL ISSUES: "BECAUSE I'M ALSO PART OF THE PROBLEM"

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Abstract

The paper draws on literature in Global Education (GE) and its relevance to the work of teachers. Having been inspired by Paulo Freire, teachers' voices are being considered in relation to the teaching of global issues. A Participatory Action Research approach was adopted as part of which photovoice was used. Findings demonstrate teachers' perceptions of global issues, as well as ways of interpreting and making sense of globalization. The latter is perceived within a framework of dichotomies of globalization and anti-globalization. Through collective discussion, teachers labeled themselves complicit to existing global issues. As such, we suggest that teachers' educational wisdom on teaching about global issues seems to align to postcolonial approaches within GE. Therefore, we argue that teachers' voices offer insightful perspectives for perceptions and conceptualizations of Global Education.

Keywords: *Global Issues; Global Education; Teachers; Photovoice; Paulo Freire.*

Introduction

This special issue pays tribute to the work of distinct educationalist Paulo Freire, as in 2021 hundred years were celebrated since his birth. The paper draws on general principles from the theoretical field of global education (GE), which has been influenced to a great degree by Freirean approaches and critical pedagogy (McCloskey et al., 2021). GE reflects on a wider body of scholarship that is rapidly growing and recognizes the importance of educational responses to the increased interconnectedness, impacts of globalization and

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challenges across local and global contexts (Torres and Tarozzi, 2020). It was formally introduced in European educational policy as part of the 2002 Maastricht Declaration, which defined GE as follows:

> *GE is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all* (Europe-wide Global Education Congress, 2002, p. 2).

The importance for formal educational settings to reflect on global issues as part of teaching and learning approaches is also noted in the most recent agenda of the United Nations (2015) and more specifically in the Sustainable Development Goal 4.7. This goal explicitly refers to the necessity for learners to develop knowledge and skills aiming to create a more sustainable, just, and equitable society (United Nations, 2015). Despite the increased theoretical development within the field, only recently there is emerging research that highlights how teachers incorporate global issues as part of their teaching and learning (Goodwin, 2020).

Other than the theoretical influences of Freirean thinking in conceptualizing GE, we further reflect on Freire's method of work with communities and the importance he placed on the reflection of the peoples towards their journey of emancipation:

> *The prerequisite for this task [solving societal problems] was a form of education enabling the people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities, and their role in the new cultural climate - indeed to reflect on their very power of reflection* (Freire, 1974, p. 13).

This small-scale study adopted a participatory action research design and used photovoice as its method of data collection. It aims to open-up spaces for teachers to reflect on their perceptions about the teaching of global issues. The findings from this paper seek to build on the ongoing and emerging research that draws on the work of teachers and how their perceptions about the teaching of global issues can further influence conceptualizations of GE (Pashby and Sund, 2020).

Literature review

GE does not refer to a set-in-stone pedagogical approach, but instead reflects on a wider body of values-based educational initiatives (Tarozzi and Torres, 2016), including for instance human rights education or peace education (Edge, 2019; Jerome and Starkey, 2021; Zembylas, 2018). One of the most prominent debates within the field of GE is about the range of ideological perspectives influencing perceptions of GE. To address this, over the years, different publications have examined a range of typologies reflecting on ideological traditions (Oxley and Morris, 2013; Pashby et al., 2020). A key distinction differentiates between soft and critical notions of GE, having emerged from the work of Andreotti (2006). The former refers to approaches of GE that build on developing a global awareness, however, at times, such implementations promote a charitable character by unconsciously reproducing stereotypical views about the superiority of the North versus the impoverished South. Instead, a critical perspective, influenced by critical and postcolonial remarks, seeks to challenge these stereotypes by offering alternative possibilities that take into consideration knowledge and lived experiences of the marginalized and oppressed. In recent scholarship, the critical notion

seems to have encouraged a deeper examination of the educational system and offered hereby a challenging mechanism to the neoliberal narrative and practices of homogenization in GE (Bourn, 2020).

Across the literature, an increasing number of projects have been considering GE in teacher education programmes, as well as perceptions and preparedness of pre-service teachers to teach about global issues (Ekanayake et al., 2020; Estellés and Fischman, 2021; Liston and Devitt, 2020; Yemini, Tibbitts, and Goren, 2019). Despite the significant role of education practitioners in delivering approaches about the teaching of global issues, as well as the difficulties for teachers to choosing the right framework to do so (Peterson and Warwick, 2014), only recently, emerging work is noted in the intersection of the fields of GE and teaching of in-service practitioners (Goodwin, 2020; Myers, 2020). Despite a multitude of inspiring work within GE that take into consideration a range of approaches implemented by practitioners in teaching about global issues (Cruz et al., 2020; Tinkler, 2021), specific interest for this paper were the findings from studies on in-service teachers.

Pashby and Sund (2020) examined perspectives and teaching approaches of secondary school teachers about the teaching of global issues following their participation in professional development workshops that introduced them to the HEADUPS tool. The framework emerging from the work of Andreotti (2012) that allows teachers to reflect on aspects of critical literacy and postcolonial theory (see more in Andreotti, 2012; Pashby and Sund, 2020). Their findings indicate that teachers, other than engaging more critically with the teaching of global issues, seemed to start their journey of reflection by reviewing their own approaches to teaching and learning (Pashby and Sund, 2020). Similar findings are also mentioned in other recent research projects, indicating that teachers' engagement with GE initiatives specifically positioned in critical frameworks open up further opportunities and spaces for teachers' reflection (Bentall, 2020; Efthymiou, 2022). This is of course not uncommon within the wider field of GE and noted more often in the literature about the transformative dimension and opportunities for practitioners engaging with GE (Bourn and Morgan, 2010; De Angelis, 2019; MacCallum, 2017; McCloskey et al., 2021; Sterling, 2010). In the case of teachers, spaces of teachers' reflections seem to be positioned within the framework of the teaching profession and the influences of the neoliberal project to the profession (Pashby and Sund, 2020). The neoliberal influences can be noticed across teaching communities through: the intensification of the teaching profession (Apple, 1986, 2018), the commodification and marketization of education (Robertson and Dale, 2015), the assault on educational values (Giroux, 2015) and most importantly the fact that teachers' have been deprived from their power to teach (Biesta, 2017). In that sense, it seems that engaging with approaches of GE that are placed within a critical framework does not only allow teachers to engage with more critical aspects of teaching global issues (Andreotti, 2012; Bourn, 2020; Pashby and Sund, 2020), but it further enables them to opening up spaces of reflection for teachers to examine their positionality in a teaching framework that is severely influenced by neoliberal narratives and instructions (Efthymiou, 2022; Pashby and Sund, 2020).

Theoretical framework

The influences from the field of critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory determined our perceptions and conceptualization of GE (Andreotti, 2011; Freire, 1974; Giroux, 2011). In line with many others before us

(Bourn, 2014; McCloskey et al., 2021), we recognize GE as a pedagogical initiatives that seeks to challenge prevailing neoliberal orthodoxies and to question narratives of supremacy of the global North versus the global South, whilst offering possibilities of examining global issues through the lens of social justice (Bourn, 2020).

Having reflected on our positionality as education practitioners, as well as wider literature relating to the teaching profession and its commodification further influence our theoretical perceptions in this study (Apple, 1986; Robertson and Dale, 2015). Using Freire's (1996) distinction between oppressors and oppressed, we see teachers as oppressed by the neoliberal project, experiencing life in a highly prescribed context (Apple , 1986). In that sense, we further identify the transformative possibilities of GE that could allow teachers to question normative practices imposed by neoliberal instruction (De Angelis, 2019; Efthymiou, 2022; Pashby and Sund, 2020).

However, we also identify the danger of sub-oppressing. Freire (1996) described that in the process of "re-humanization" the oppressed entail the danger of turning into sub-oppressors themselves by imposing their own reality. This is expected, as it is the reality and the humanity that the oppressed are familiar with. Through influences from critical theory in our conceptualization of GE, we further consider our own role in the neoliberal machine, which is indicated by experiencing the world as hyper privileged beings through our whiteness, abled-bodies, European passports, and economic status. Thus as critical scholars we seek to create awareness about our own role in the neoliberal play (Spivak, 2012) through ongoing reflexivity.

Therefore, we wanted trust the teachers as the ones having the "educational wisdom" and the "teacher judgement" to be able to make the right decisions for their communities, and most importantly giving back to them the power to do so (Biesta, 2013, 2017). Thus, rather than us becoming sub-oppressors (Freire, 1996) or simply ending up "grand-theorizing" with little relevance to teachers' practice (Apple, 2014), we wanted to recognize the importance of teachers as a community oppressed by the neoliberal instruction. Similar to Freire's work with communities of oppressed groups, our aim with this small-scale study was to allow teachers to take up space and express their own decisions about the teaching of global issues and allow for their judgement and wisdom to further influence GE perspectives.

Methodology

The design of this small-scale study is based on a qualitative research paradigm and as explored in the theoretical framework the aim is to explore how teachers reflect on the teaching of global issues. Freirean praxis significantly influenced the research design, and as such, a participatory action research methodology (PAR) was used (Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, 2014). As a part of the PAR, three secondary school teachers from an international school in an urban region of the Netherlands were invited to reflect on their teaching about global issues. Participants included two female practitioners and one male. Vincent and Lisa are white Europeans, teaching social studies and languages, respectively, whilst Tabitha is a woman of color from Asia teaching science.

Photovoice was used as a method to elicit data, which also has its roots in Freirean philosophy, who used photography as a way for members of the communities he worked with to expose the conditions of their

oppression (Liebenberg, 2018). For Wang and Burris, the photos itself have the potential for advocacy campaigns as a form of social action, as they encouraged participants to capture their lived experiences and daily reality (Wang and Burris, 1997). Photovoice, thus, embraces a "nothing-for-us-without-us" attitude towards research (Liebenberg, 2018), which fits with our interpretation of teachers as currently oppressed by the neoliberal machine.

The process of photovoice adopted here took place in two stages. In the first stage, teachers were asked to reflect on the following question prompt by taking photographs for a period of two weeks during the summer of 2021. The question prompt given to the teachers was the following:

"What does learning for social change in a globalized world mean to you?"

They were advised to take between five to ten photographs and were further asked to individually organize each of their photographs in a diamond nine shape placing them in order of importance starting from the top of the diamond. As part of the second stage of the photovoice process, participating teachers were invited to partake in a semi-structured focus group discussions that included all of them and the two authors of this paper. As part of the focus group discussions, researchers shared the top three pictures from each of the individual teachers' diamond nine shapes. Teachers were asked to work together and converse while creating a new diamond nine shape with their combined top three photographs in response to the above question prompt. Although recognizing the issues of power that come with our positionality as researchers, we actively sought as part of the process to allow participants to lead in the interaction (Kara, 2015). Following the conceptual framework discussed earlier it was important for us give as much space as possible to the teachers to converse about their educational wisdom and teachers' judgement on the teaching of global issues.

While this research is positioned within a pragmatic approach that actively seeks to consider the lived experiences of the participating teachers as well as reflection on action (Weaver, 2018), the research design is also influenced by critical theory in several of its layers. Through the participatory design of the research and the theoretical foundation of the study, as well as the manner of analysis which was an inductive approach. Social change in the form of observed injustices and oppressions in our globalized world, which we ourselves perceive as structural and historical, articulated by Freire as "structures of domination in which they [the oppressed] are immersed" (Freire, 1996, p. 47). The transcript of the focus group discussion resulted to a codebook, findings of which are discussed in the next section.

This study focusses on an in-depth exploration of teachers' perception of global injustices through a Freirean lens. It also aims to zoom-in on individual cases of teachers and how their interpretations and teaching of global issues can contribute to a continuous "pool of findings" (Stenhouse, 1985) of our constant re-examination of the meaning of GE in contemporary education.

Taking into consideration the limits of this study only one cycle of PAR was incorporated that included three core elements: investigation, reflection and action as represented in Figure 1 (McIntyre, 2008). The findings reflect on each of these these three stages of the PAR.

Topic 1: Teachers visualizing global issues

The participants discuss what they perceive to be global issues as created by globalization or as a result of our interconnectedness. The reflections of the participants articulate their understanding of current-day global issues or what is important for learning in a globalized world.

Example Quotes	Label	Explanation
okay, but maybe consumerism, you know, it's literally happening all over the world. Because at the moment, yeah, all these products, I guess, that are made in China. Vincent 2:35	Labelling consumerism as a global issue.	An example of a global issue mentioned by the participant is consumerism.
Hopefully there might be more black leaders as Obama is standing there. And somebody else I think it was in Turkey holding an umbrella above him. Lisa 4:11	Seeing racism as a global issue.	Racism is an example of a global issue highlighted by the participant.
That one is also becoming more, more normal in the Western world and not everywhere of course. Yeah, homosexual families, which I really like to see. Lisa 5:03	Seeing LGBTQ issues as a global issue.	The participant is naming the discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation as a global issue.
Yeah, this one is a women leaders. So this could relate to this, this that we are talking about this much more and I see I think it's becoming more normal. Or, yeah, it's becoming, it's changing. Lisa 9:52	Seeing women leadership as a global change.	The participant mentioned that the increased of women in leadership positions is an indication that gender equality is improving.
Is this fair in general, is this, is this sustainable. So with this picture, for me, it shows like, first of all, how interdependent we are, and also how interconnected we are, and we need us each other, and it can be used in a really good way in a really bad way. Or in a neutral way. Vincent 20:03	Seeing global issues as moments of interdependence of each other.	The participant describes a global issues as a moment of interdependency, which can be in a good way, bad way, or a neutral way.
Most of our students coming from different countries, and [we think] they are already quite exposed. But that's not the case. Tabitha 23:39	Highlighting that diversity is not necessarily turning into understanding globalization or global realities.	The participant highlights that even though students might come from different countries, they are not necessarily aware of potential global issues or negative elements of our interconnectedness.
And, and they talk about what their mother tongue is, what is the most important language in their life? or What does your name mean? Exactly. And then they just find out things about themselves, or they don't even know what their family name means. Or where it comes from. So they do they do talk about that. Lisa 31:19	Explaining that global issues starts with understanding yourself.	The participant explains that in their subject, global issues are discussed by starting to think about their own identity and their own family stories in order to understand their own investment in globalization.

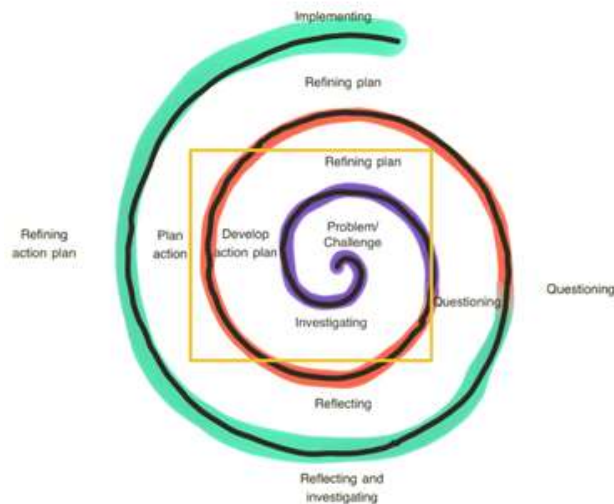Table 1 - *A selection of the codebook*.

Figure 1 - *Visual representation PAR showing the focus for this study*, modified from McIntyre (2008). Each colour is representing a different stage of the research.

Findings

The findings of this small-scale exploration of teachers' reflections on teaching global issues were perceived to be evoked through critical moments between them whilst ranking their photos. Certain moments during the focus group were perceived detrimental for the overall direction of the discussion, and further allowed the teachers to position their discussion within a PAR framework of investigation, reflection and potential future action in relation to the problem raised to them as part of the given question prompt (Laws, 2020). The findings demonstrate the gradual development of teachers' narrative in response to the three phases of the PAR design.

Investigation phase

A critical moment was evident and allowed teachers to enter the investigation stage of the posed problem. This started with the deconstruction of the given prompt from the teachers. The question for the participants was purposefully broad, so they could interpret the question however they felt suitable without too much interference from our side as the researchers. As soon as the participants wanted to start with the ranking of their images, Tabitha suggested to exchange everyone's interpretation of the question. Hereby, some frustration from one of the teachers was noticeable, as she felt that the vagueness of the question was hindering her in fully understanding the assignment. Lisa said:

> *I think it's, it's too complex. […] I'm sorry for that. But when I got [the question], I was thinking, this is, this is not… it's not a concrete thing.*

Therefore, the participants deconstructed the question piece by piece. So, they started to explain what they consider with learning, and then focusing on learning for social change in a globalized society. Hereby the direction of the conversation went into a more critical narrative towards the subjectivity of social change for whom and what for. Vincent continued:

So, you are assuming that there are things that need to be changed? And maybe, you know, I really agree with that, but it means that everyone has to agree with that specific requirement.

The deconstruction of the question by the participating teachers does not only determine their understanding of the globalized world as one that requires change, but most importantly that the participating teachers were not ready to simply give in into yet another blueprint (Biesta, 2013) imposed by someone external to their own teaching and learning. Furthermore, the deconstruction of the question and the teachers challenging us, further allowed them to pick upon our ideological perspectives, which we consider powerful. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

The critical moment continued with the teachers' re-formulation of the posed problem into a new question that was suitable for them. Hence, before participants started ranking their combined photos in the diamond nine shape, Vincent articulated the main question posed to each other:

Ok then let's think... what do we need… what do we need to change?

Reflection phase

The discussion on the ranking of the photographs indicated teachers' reflections on global issue, which is categorized by two prevailing themes:

- Teachers' identification of global issues.
- Teachers' interpretation of global issues through dichotomies.

Theme 1: Identification of global issues

The discussion between the teachers involved as expected the identification of global issues that was stimulated by the existence of teachers' images on the desk in front of them. Figure 2 demonstrates the final ranking that teachers agreed on as part of the focus group conversation.

Figure 2 - *Final diamond nine shape made by the participants from their own images.*

The picture that they agreed on for the top of their ranking showed a family call conducted by using a digital platform. On the second row, a picture of a wedding between an Asian woman and a European man is depicted, along with a photo of a petting zoo. On the third row, the participants put a picture of students doing an experiment related to climate change, a vaccination centre located in a music venue, and an overview of women leaders at the moment. The fifth row includes a photo of a gay couple and their children, and a picture of President Obama finding shelter under an umbrella. The last picture is a collection of food from different corners of the world.

The ranking of the photographs suggested that teachers reflected on global issues that are quite prominent in the agenda of the approaches of GE. First, they reflected on social injustices like race and gender inequalities. Lisa reflected on women in power and the importance of incorporating this photograph within the diamond nine template:

> Yeah, this one is women leaders. […] that we are talking about it much more and I see, I think it's becoming more normal. Or, yeah, it's becoming, it's changing.

She approached this issue not only within a northern framework but she specifically refers to the need of gender equality across global contexts. Maintaining a similar positive outlook, she recognized the need for leadership positions to be obtained by Black people, like for example President Obama.

A second articulation of global issues was related to consumerism and the harm that causes to the environment specifically. Vincent explained:

> It's about how the industry is behaving that […], for me the critique is that nowadays we consume a lot of stupid things. I mean, they're not needed.

This was a response to a picture of football fans dressed up in the colors of their country, which was labelled through a dialogue between the participants as an example of global consumerism. Another example of this was the photo of a venue that was covered with advertisements for luxury products, while it was also the location where everyone was getting their Covid-19 vaccination. Thus, the participants hinted at the unconscious messages regarding luxury products that we are consuming while actually doing our duty as citizens.

Hereby the teachers also highlighted the role of media nowadays in conveying contrasting message about values in life. Vincent mentioned this role of the media:

> Media sometimes is sending the opposite message […]. Sure, we are trying to send this message about climate emergency is a reality […]. But maybe other institutions are not reinforcing that message.

The participants stated the impact of conflicting messages received by the students, the polarization that this might lead in the classroom and how it eventually influences their ability to teach indeed for a better and more peaceful future. Thus, perhaps the focus should be more on other institutions in society supporting

teachers in their pursuit rather than placing that burden solely on teachers. The participants afterwards were thinking about what step they could take in the future in order to work with those institutions. Lisa suggested:

> Can we ask them to have a conversation with the families and write about it something?" and "then we have to involve institutions in our teaching, because otherwise they go on different things than what we are working on.

Thus, the participants were expressing their needs in educating young people to become global citizens with an awareness for equity. They expressed the difficulty in teaching according to set standards, as for example SDG 4.7, because their message gets compromised or even contradicted by other -loud- voices in our society. The teachers referred to social media as one of the main ways in which students nowadays consume media. The teachers were already thinking about potential intervention for this challenge in the reflective conversation. As this was, only the first phase of a PAR, in subsequent phases participants would have designed an action that they would want to take in order to address the challenges that they are facing.

Another expression concerning global issue that the participants formulated together was the complexity of the aforementioned problems in the world. The participants were able to relate all their different images with each other; while they were making their ranking, a story was created that connected all their images together. It showed how they made sense of the interconnectedness that these global issues represent. Vincent stated explicitly:

> So with this picture, for me, it shows like, first of all, how interdependent we are, and also how interconnected we are, and we need each other. This can be used in a really good way, in a really bad way, or in a neutral way.

Furthermore, the interdependency was also highlighted by the way the participants acknowledged the importance of understanding yourself before trying to 'fix' others. A large part of the conversation was about the importance for students to know themselves and each other, as a part of learning together. Lisa explained that this is something they focus on in her class, by centralizing the mother tongue of students:

> They [the students] talk about what their mother tongue is, what the most important language is in their life, or what does your name mean? Then they just find out things about themselves, or they don't even know what their family name means, or where it comes from. Therefore, they do talk about that.

This might indicate that the participants do make a connection between knowing yourself and learning, especially when the learning addresses current-day global issues.

To one extent, these findings demonstrate that teachers make meaning of global issues articulated within their own personal lives, in this case related to global agendas from the North, as well as their own complicity to the existing problems.

Theme 2: Interpretation of global issues through dichotomies

This was the most prevalent theme emerging from the data. The three different participants had their own interpretation and understanding of the question they were asked and thus of globalization, and subsequently teaching responses to global issues. Whereas one participant focused more on the negative outcomes of globalization, like mass consumption and ecocide, other participants highlighted current day opportunities not possible fifty years ago. Thus, while the participants were ranking their images, it became clear that the different participants had a different interpretation of the benefits or disadvantages of an interconnected world. Vincent:

> *For me.. if I have to choose here, for me, personally, the least important is this one about food. I mean, sure, I really enjoy food from all over the world. But I think that, for example, discrimination, or literally having the opposite, having the opportunity, you know, to be connected with humans and individuals, from all over the world I have a feeling that it is for me is more important than maybe having access to food.*

This was an important moment in the conversation because the participants determined a framework for themselves as to how to assess global interdependencies, namely acknowledging the good and bad side; seeing globalization as something to celebrate or critique. Hereby, the participants were in dialogue with each other to understand each other's perspectives and understanding of the issue. Even though teachers did not necessarily reflect on their teaching practice being a part of the problem, they did articulate their complicity in the established global challenges. It was particularly evident that during teachers' reflections, they attempted to understand the teaching of global issues through their understanding of globalization, which was placed in a perspective of dichotomies. Analysis indicated three specific dichotomies through which teachers approached globalization:

- The dichotomy of then and now.
- The dichotomy of growth and destruction.
- The dichotomy of power.

As part of the first dichotomy, the participants highlighted the distinction between now and then; what was impossible in the past and how living in a globalized society has enabled us to overcome the impossible, for instance the possibility of instant communication across continents. Tabitha highlighted this point when explaining the screenshot she took of a recent family call attended by people on three different continents:

> *Before you know, all these things, Google MEETS and so on. This is not possible. So it's really globalized. All of us.*

She continued to elaborate on this point when sharing the photo she took of the different kinds of food her family is consuming:

> *It's like, I have rice, potato, pasta, all kinds of spices, Indian spices, which we have in our kitchen nowadays. It was not possible before you know. Yeah, so nice.*

Thus, globalization was defined by what it enables humans to do in contrast to what was not possible so many years ago. This is what we have named as looking at the interconnectedness of our world from a then-now dichotomy. In that sense participants identified their benefits of globalization.

A second dichotomy that was prevalent in the data was the distinction between growth and destruction. Whereas Lisa perceived many positive changes, like normalization of gay families and more women in leadership positions, others saw our interconnectedness as signals of destruction such as pollution by our litter. These were opposite interpretations of what social change is required, whereas one might promote the idea that interconnectedness is learning from each other through traveling and mobility, the other perspective highlighted more the polluting effect of our travel patterns and distribution of western ideologies. These two opposite ways of thinking about how globalization can help us to enable social change was clearly visible in the participants' individual choices of photos and throughout the reflection. It suggests that these teachers, at least, are moving away from a colonial approach towards the global South as in need of saving. They seem rather to embrace a much more critical awareness about their own role in perpetuating structures that allow for inequality of any kind to exist.

The third dichotomy that was prevalent was the distinction between the role of ordinary people and leaders in creating a just society, explicitly reflecting on issues of power evident across societies. Lisa put two photos in her diamond that focused on the role of leaders, namely Black leaders and women leaders, hereby emphasizing that it is not just political leaders but also leaders in communities and other elements in society. However, this contrasted to the ideas that Vincent brought forward during the conversation, as he aimed to highlight the role of regular people in contributing to change rather than a leader. Vincent indicated this opposing viewpoint by highlighting the role of the individual:

> I'm also part of the problem, definitely. And then, of course, you also have to explore possible solution. So it's like, ok… you're bringing these pieces of plastic every day, how can you substitute that? […] Because I'm also part of the problem.

This showed some conflicting perceptions about the role of leaders versus individuals when it comes down to executing on the social change that is deemed necessary.

Action phase

Teachers seemed to notice issues of criticality and deconstruction through their own conversations. Despite recognizing their role in the neoliberal play, teachers also seemed to identify their role in seeking to challenge such approaches as part of their practice (Spivak, 2012). Following the debate and reflections on placing the photographs as part of the diamond nine shape, an extensive conversation was led by the participating teachers in thinking about how each of these could be incorporated as part of their teaching and learning practice.

Lisa shared the realization that she had through the conversation with her peers:

> I would like to use a more critical approach as well.

For Freire (1974) there was real power in reflecting on one's actions, so to learn from and about each other's struggle as to find liberation in the end. In our findings as well, we see the potential of shared reflections as the teachers created a shared understanding of the world around them through a dialogue that brought new insights to everyone involved in the conversations, whilst also giving indications of these teachers' understanding of global issues through a framework of dichotomies.

Discussion

The significance of this small-scale exploration of the potential of PAR to create an opportunity for teachers to express their needs in educating global citizens is to emphasize that the process is as important as the outcome. It shows that knowing is a process that requires communication between people to come to an understanding about global issues and our complicity. In this small-scale study, powerful new insights were led by the teachers' critical reflections. Findings from this preliminary study suggest that PAR along with photovoice could empower teachers into building a critical community of practitioners that is so needed in Europe nowadays (Tarozzi and Torres, 2016).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that practitioners do understand their own complicity in perpetuating current-day global crises and positioning themselves as part of the problem. This aligns with a postcolonial perspective (Spivak, 2012), which advocates for a critical GE rathern than a soft one. Teachers were able to engage in a conversation about their willingness to challenge aspects of the neoliberal structure as a part of their teaching. Based on their own understanding of complicity, they were able to name their challenges in delivering a message to create a more peaceful world, as other institution in society might be counterproductive.

Most importantly though it seemed that teachers' reflections and conversations about the teaching of global issues emerged through an initial assessment of what globalization meant to them. As it was discussed, this assessment was based in various dichotomies, something that poses similarities to Spivak's framework of the "double-bind" (Spivak 2012). As part of her postcolonial exploration of education in a globalizing context, Spivak makes the argument that the ideal of deconstruction of the colonial construct is something impossible. She argues that the possibility of deconstruction should be based on learning how to play the double bind. The double bind, in Spivak's exploration, refers to the possibilities of deconstruction within a colonial context, which which is a part of our lives and to escape it means to work with it. In that sense, teachers' realization of the globalization within a framework of dichotomies could demonstrate their implicit adoption of Spivak's framework of postcolonial deconstruction. This is shown by teachers recognizing the problems of globalization and acknowledging their active role in the neoliberal play. However, the teachers explored possibilities of challenging the neoliberal by utulizing elements of it, which relates to Spivak's argument of the "double-bind". Future studies could explore whether these implicit opportunities emerging from teachers' reflection on the teaching of global issues, could further our explicit perception of teachers' educational wisdom in defining our perceptions and conceptualization within the wider field of Global Education (Biesta, 2013).

Conclusion

This study is dominantly influenced by and drawn on Freirean approaches at its different stages; first, in its rationale and inception, second, in reflecting on aspects of GE through a critical perspective and lastly, through its research design and methodology. Freirean praxis has inspired us to design this project, and allow teachers to reflect on the teaching of global issues, whilst recognizing their oppressed state from neoliberal instruction. Having placed this research in a PAR framework and having used photovoice to elicit data has further allowed teachers to reflect on circumstances evident in their professional lives, whilst giving them space to reflect on their educational wisdom in relation to the teaching of global issues. Findings indicate that teachers might be more ready that we might think in starting their journey of liberation bottom-up, as they seem to be aware of their role in the colonial context and their responsibility in promoting teaching approaches to deconstruct it.

Even though our study was small-scale involving only three participants who participated in only one cycle of PAR, we aimed to inspire other researchers to focus not only on the outcome of the study but to pay equal emphasize on the process. We recognize that our participants were from a specific group of teachers, namely those teaching at an international school in a country which is another than the one in which they were born and raised. Therefore, further studies could include teachers from public schools and with more homogenous backgrounds to explore the potential of PAR as a way to inform GE practices.

Acknowledgements

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