Perspectives

EXPLORING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION THROUGH INTEGRATED CURRICULA

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Abstract: This article is informed by a qualitative case study of a primary school in England which developed an integrated school curriculum which focused on global citizenship education (GCE). The school followed a number of steps to create an integrated curriculum with the aim of inspiring its students to engage in global learning and active citizenship. If we are to prepare our students to be effective citizens, we must inspire them to engage with lifelong learning, and not to discard subjects when they have been completed school. Lifelong learning is essential to the aspirations of GCE which aims to equip students to be effective citizens in an ever changing global society (Banks, 2008; Merryfield and Duty, 2008; Banks, 2006; Davies et al., 2010).

This article outlines a number of delivery models for curricula which range from the traditional fragmented model of delivery where subjects follow very distinctive divisions to pure student-led immersed models in which discipline lines fade and the student is enabled to choose the most effective themes and methods to explore topics (Fogarty, 1991; Kysilka, 1998). According to Kysilka (1998) and Drăghicescu et al. (2013) the main focus of effective integrated curricula is on forming connections between the school and the 'real world'. Indeed, many researchers have found that students who have been exposed to integrated curricula experience both higher academic achievement and a deeper engagement with the topics explored (DeLuca et al., 2015; Anderson, 2013; Drăghicescu et al., 2013; Cervetti et al., 2012; Johnston, 2011; White, 2008; Schultz, 2007).

Key words: Global Citizenship Education; schools' curricula; integrated delivery, immersive education; lifelong learning.

Dewey (1902) has taught us that the 'child' and the 'subject' are interdependent elements which shape school curricula. When examining the way in which we deliver curricula in schools it is vital that our aspirations for the 'child' are intertwined with the 'subject' matter we wish to deliver. Fogarty (1991: 61) describes subjects in the traditional fragmented model of curricula as 'something you take once and need never take again'. This concept is counter to the aspirations for the 'child' within global citizenship education (GCE) which aims to equip students to be effective citizens in an ever changing global society (Banks, 2006, 2008; Davies et al., 2010; Merryfield and Duty, 2008). If we are to prepare our students to be effective citizens, we must inspire them to engage with lifelong learning, and not to discard a subject once it has been completed. Furthermore, Ashbridge and Josephidou (2009) have stated that due to the way in which children learn, an integrated approach to curriculum design and delivery is the most effective way to support children's learning and development. Integrated curricula are those which blur the divisions between subject specific teachings and allow themes and topics to be taught through multiple curricular subjects simultaneously.

This article is informed by a qualitative case study of a primary school in England which developed an integrated school curriculum which focused on GCE. The school in question was highlighted as an example of good practice in the area of GCE by TIDE Global Learning which has worked with a number of schools in the design and implementation of global curricula.

What is an integrated curriculum?

There are a number of delivery models which curricula can follow from the traditional fragmented model to a pure student-led immersed model (Fogarty, 1991). The fragmented model organises the curriculum along distinct disciplines, traditionally focusing heavily on mathematics and language. The ten levels of curriculum integration outlined by Fogarty (1991) identify ways that teachers can 'blend content and/or create seamless curricula' (Kysilka, 1998: 198). The curriculum designed by the case study school lies somewhere between level six, the webbed model, and level ten, the networked model. The essential element of the webbed model is the construction of learning around

central themes, which was the main focus in the case study school. However, the school did not focus on these themes through distinct subjects, but followed the integrated model of level eight where discipline lines faded and themes were explored through multiple subjects simultaneously (Kysilka, 1998). Elements of level ten, the networked model, were also evident in the case study school as children were in control of the integration process and directed their own learning (Fogarty, 1991).

Kysilka (1998) has labelled the networked model as highly sophisticated and therefore unlikely to exist in either primary or secondary school. Within the case study, school children were given the freedom to choose the themes and methods to explore them. However, it cannot be said that they directed their learning with complete discipline as one might expect given the age group. Teachers needed to ensure that certain learning outcomes were met and so guided the learning and exploration undertaken by the students. Alternative models of integrated curricula are offered by Drăghicescu et al. (2013), who identify four levels of curriculum construction, ranging from monodiciplinarity to transdisciplinarity. While elements of all four levels were evident in the curriculum of the case study school, it was most closely linked with level two, multidiscipliarity. Within this level, multiple disciplines or subjects are engaged with central themes.

Drăghicescu et al. (2013) have also identified a number of elements evident in effective integrated curricula which are in line with those identified by Kysilka (1998). According to Kysilka (1998) and Drăghicescu et al. (2013) the main focus of effective integrated curricula is a connection to society and the 'real world'. By focusing on themes and issues which are grounded in reality, student engagement is heightened and their learning and acquisition of skills is deepened. A second essential feature of integrated curricula is an effective partnership between the teacher and students working co-operatively and thereby enhancing the learning experience of all. Additionally, Anderson (2013) has articulated that effective integrated curricula go beyond textbooks in the search for knowledge, and use themes to organise principles being explored.

Many of the above elements were evident in the case study school, which chose to focus its integrated curricula on GCE in order to create a connection to the 'real world'. There was also a strong partnership evident between staff and students in the school who worked together to create diverse learning experiences that went beyond textbooks. Many researchers have found that students who have been exposed to integrated curricula experience both higher academic achievement and a deeper engagement with topics explored (Anderson, 2013; Cervetti et al., 2012; DeLuca et al., 2015; Drăghicescu et al., 2013; Johnston, 2011; Schultz, 2007; White, 2008). Schultz (2007) has noted in particular that when focusing on solving a problem, students began reading at a much higher aptitude level than they were used to, and consistently challenged themselves across curriculum subjects in order to reach their goal.

Curriculum integration and global citizenship education

The case study school chose to implement an integrated curriculum as a means to strengthening its commitment to and focus on GCE within the school. While GCE is an evolving field, the case study established that it sits within the discourses of human rights, social justice, and democracy (Clough and Holden, 1996; Davies, 2006; Dower, 2003; Osler and Starkey, 2005; Oxfam, 2006; Poulsen-Hanson, 2002; Smyth, 2011; Tanner, 2007). The school's interpretation of GCE can be aligned with Dower's (2003: 7) interconnected components of being a global citizen, namely 'the normative claim', 'the existential claim' and 'the aspirational claim'.

Due to his belief in human rights and responsibilities, the school principal was most closely aligned with Dower's (2003) 'normative claim'. This claim holds that global citizens have duties and responsibilities as human beings and that all human beings are worthy of 'moral respect'. The school's global curriculum leader had a strong commitment to acting for justice in the world which was in line with Dower's 'existential claim' which posits that as citizens of the world, we are all members of a global community, sometimes understood as 'institutional or quasi-political in character'. The children interviewed and observed were very ambitious in their world view, and

believed that all human beings had the potential to become effective global citizens. This world view is closely linked with Dower's (2003) third component, the 'aspirational claim' which holds 'that the world can and should become one in which basic values are realised more fully' and that this requires the strengthening of community and institutions. Dower (2003: 7) holds that these three elements are not mutually exclusive and that in an individual's approach to the world, these claims will overlap to varying degrees. Although I align members of the school community with just one standpoint, I understand that their beliefs overlapped. The variety of beliefs within the school contributed to an atmosphere of mutual support and growth.

White (2008) outlines that an effective way of addressing social and cultural issues in society is for teachers to embed issues of social justice throughout the curriculum. Indeed, due to a focus on social justice issues directly affecting his pupils, Shultz's (2007) students were energised in their learning and he posited that 'every subject lost its compartmentalisation and became integrated and integral in solving the problem'. The students in the case study school also transcended the curriculum in their exploration of GCE. While focusing on the theme of home, children in the case study school chose to create a new country as they asserted that governments needed to become more participatory and communities more united.

Methodology

This article is guided by a qualitative case study which was undertaken as part of a Masters thesis in 2013. It examined 'the inclusion of GCE in a primary school in England' (Golden, 2013). There were a number of elements within these boundaries including; the teaching and learning of GCE, the perspectives of teachers and learners, and the overall school atmosphere. Thomas (2011: 13) views the case study as a situation or event, and advises us to attend to the particular set of circumstances which surrounded it. In this instance the case study was influenced at a macro level by national educational policy and at a local level by the socio-economic make-up of the local community.

This case study embraced a multiple methods approach (Robson, 2011), including: one-on-one interviews, focus groups, observation, draw and write, photographs, and document analysis. Rogers (2009: 103) embraces multiple methods in order to 'privilege the participants' choice of what data they chose to contribute'. This view is particularly noteworthy in relation to working with children as we need to be 'open to the many creative ways young children use to express their views and experiences' (Clark & Moss, 2001: 5). I conducted two individual interviews; one with a classroom teacher – the global curriculum leader – and the other with the school principal. I also held three focus groups with children as I sought to develop knowledge 'with' children and not just 'for' or 'about' them (McNaughton & Smith, 2005: 112).

Structured observation was used in the classroom using a predetermined category recording system where the number of times different categories of behaviour, activities and content were evident in the classroom were recorded. I also made detailed field notes about the activities and lesson content as well as personal reflections throughout the process. While some researchers (Robson, 2011; Thomas, 2009; Simpson et al., 1995) advocate for a higher level of detail in recording through the use of time-scale check-lists, this strategy was not relevant in this instance as there was such a wide range of variables being focused on.

Both photography and draw-and-write pictures were used during focus groups with the children to afford them maximum opportunity to convey their thoughts and experiences through a variety of media. Visual methods aided the communication process between adults and children (Backett-Milburn and McKie, 1999: 389). On my first visit to the school, children were given an information pack which included written instructions for a draw-and-write task and a request for photographs to be taken on the theme of GCE. These were then used in focus group interviews to elicit information and stimulate conversation. Harper (2010: 13) contends that '...images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than words; exchanges based on words alone utilise less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words'. Bradding and Horstman (1999:

173) maintain that 'the draw and write technique generated rich, qualitative data that has immediate impact and value in its own right'. I found that the visual data created by the children offered a useful insight into their views and thoughts. Secondary data comprised school documents, the school web site, and the most recent Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) report and Department for Education (DfE) performance data. Three school documents were also examined: the Curriculum Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, and Personal, Social and Health Education Policy.

How one school developed an integrated global citizenship curriculum

The school made the decision to focus on global citizenship, and subsequently created an integrated curriculum following a review of activities being undertaken in the school and in response to the national educational context. Previously, the sole interaction with global learning in the school was a partnership with a school in The Gambia, which was largely seen by staff as 'one sided and imbalanced'. The school was also struggling with a national curriculum they found restrictive and not in-line with their desire to focus on global citizenship.   The steps taken to implement the integrated GCE curriculum can be seen in the table below.

Figure 1: Implementing an Integrated Global Citizenship Education Curriculum

Step	Activity	Description
1	Review of current practices by Tide Global Learning	- Individual and group interviews with staff - Focus on school vision of education and current practices
2	Leadership role established	Global Curriculum Leader
3	Training and workshops led by the Global Curriculum Leader	Workshops focused on: - Staff understanding of GCE - Elements of holistic development - School aims for curriculum
4	Development of Integrated GCE Curriculum	Digital tool which included aims and objectives of national curriculum in each subject area, and school aims for GCE
5	Maintaining commitment	- Whole school activities - Consultation with parents and community - Ongoing staff development - Sharing of ideas and outcomes

The role of the Global Curriculum Leader outlined in step two was found to be instrumental in designing and implementing the new curriculum and in maintaining the school commitment over time. The Global Curriculum Leader ensured that staff engaged in continued professional and personal development in the area of GCE; she also coordinated school-wide events and trips on the theme of GCE and monitored the continued implementation of the integrated GCE curriculum.

The digital tool which can be seen in step four was key to easing the stress of teachers trying to meet the objectives of a national 'monodisciplinary' or 'fragmented' curriculum while allowing their students to guide their own thematic integrated learning. This tool was installed in all the school computers and allowed the teachers to tick off national curriculum objectives as soon as they were covered and track subjects which were being neglected. There was also space within the tool for teachers to make a note of the themes covered by the class and the way each objective was met. The information from this tool was then passed on to the teacher taking the class the following year, which allowed teachers to ensure there was minimal repetition of themes and enabled pupils to build on the skills learned on previous years.

Within class groups, teachers would allow their students to choose a weekly or monthly theme. In older classes students were given the opportunity to choose the themes themselves, whereas, in younger classes, students voted on a set list of themes provided by the teacher. Students then brainstormed on ways to explore their theme and were given the opportunity to guide their own learning and choose methodologies used to explore themes. Through interviews, focus groups and observation it became evident that activities spanned multiple national curriculum subjects, including geography, history, English, art and design, design and technology, mathematics, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and music.

Using the digital curriculum tool, teachers could track what national curriculum aims were being met by their students. The Global Curriculum Leader identified pupil-led lessons, questioning and discussion as the most frequently used methodologies in the school. She outlined that children were encouraged to work from their own initiative, but occasionally teachers needed to deliver focused teaching to ensure national curriculum objectives were being met. She maintained that pupils often met objectives without realising it as teachers 'lead a lot more into questioning and discussion in class – there isn't a lot of delivery – I think it's just us tweaking and where we want the children to go' (Golden, 2013). Whole-school projects and activities were often used by the school to maintain the commitment to GCE and further reinforce the

pupils learning. Multiple class groups sometimes focused on the same theme and created group projects which were used to engage in peer teaching on the theme. The school also engaged regularly in whole-school assemblies where students and teachers could discuss topics and display work carried out in class groups.

The teachers also spoke of a strong connection with parents, with whom they engaged in on-going consultation and discussion. One example given by the Global Curriculum Leader highlighted the tensions which sometimes exist between the aspirations of the school, and the viewpoints of the parents. The school wanted to take the children to a mosque to learn about Islam in an attempt to counter stereotypes, but many parents felt that the school was promoting extremism and objected to students participating in the trip. The teachers and principal responded by inviting a British soldier to speak with both children and parents about his experiences of Muslim people in Afghanistan. Through discussion and debate, the school and the parents came to a collective decision to go ahead with the trip to the mosque.

Malik et al. (2011) outline twelve tips for developing an integrated curriculum. The case study school follows tips which advocate for training staff members, deciding on the scope and level of integration, continued communication with students and staff, and making a commitment to ongoing evaluation. The school falls down where Malik et al. (2011) promote devising assessment methods and establishing a comprehensive timetable and list of themes to follow. While the school actively chose to follow a more fluid approach to implementing their curriculum without predetermined themes, they admitted to a weakness in their approach to assessment of integrated learning.

Conclusions

According to data analysis, the case study school aligned itself with Fielding's (2012: 688) fifth level of school organisation: 'Schools as agents of Democratic Fellowship'. Fielding posits that the ways in which we work in schools should be transformed by the moral character of what we are doing.

This was evident in the case study school as the commitment to and interpretation of GCE strongly influenced the practices, ethos and policies of the school. Organising a school along democratic principles is recognised as an essential element of GCE (Cough and Holden, 1996; Davies, 2006; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Poulsen-Hanson, 2002; Tanner, 2007). The democratic practices being employed in the school were praised by Ofsted who claimed that children's involvement in decision making was having a positive effect on their learning. The most recent Ofsted inspection to be carried out prior to the case study in September 2011 resulted in the school being rated as 'Good'. Ofsted was impressed by the school's commitment to GCE and the evident impact on its students, stating that 'the global learning project (GLP) promotes pupils' good knowledge and understanding of different cultures and communities', and that the GLP is a key driver in pupils' involvement in planning and guiding their own learning.

As mentioned above, members of the school community have slightly different interpretations of GCE, which was not seen to create a tension but rather a symbiotic whole within the school. During interviews, the school community highlighted that their interpretation of GCE clashed with government ideals for education. This tension between prescriptive national curricula and the principles and ideals of GCE has been mirrored by other researchers (Davies et al., 2005; DfID, 2003; Rapoport, 2010; SERDEC & LDESG, 2002, cited in Davies, 2006). During an Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) annual conference, Wegimont (2013: 8) posited that 'a paradigm shift is required to put global education at the heart of educational systems'. The case study school invested heavily in the development of GCE through self-reflection working with an outside organisation, and developing policies and curriculum approaches. However, as Wegimont (2013) articulated, in order for GCE to advance nationally, a paradigm shift must occur in order to ensure both government and schools are working towards the same goals. Evidence from the case study suggests that the 'paradigm shift' required is a move towards the introduction of a more integrated national curriculum, breaking down the barriers of existing fragmented curricula.

The key elements in the success of the integrated curriculum found in the school were the development of the digital tool for curriculum tracking and the establishment of the Global Curriculum Leadership role within the school. These two elements allowed the school to maintain its strong child-centred focus without losing sight of their commitment to progress GCE within the school.

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