



## Introduction: Rethinking Global Citizenship Education from the ground up: Intentions, power, and accidents

*Simona Szakács-Behling,<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Riggan,<sup>2</sup> Bassel Akar<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Germany*

<sup>2</sup>*Arcadia University, Pennsylvania, USA*

<sup>3</sup>*Notre Dame University-Louaize, Lebanon*

### *Abstract*

In their introduction, the editors of the special issue call for a re-examination of GCE and how we research it. Following a discussion of the complexities and inadequacies inherent in the terminologies, theories, and practices around GCE in debates to date, they explain the necessity for a profound epistemological, ontological, and methodological shift (Pashby, da Costa, Stein & Andreotti, 2020) via an emic, or ‘bottom-up,’ approach and how emic narratives, discourses, and practices such as those presented in this special issue can inform novel conceptualizations. While what the editors call ‘intentional’ GCE is conventionally based on normative, top-down definitions of what education policy actors deem to be a GCE agenda, an ‘accidental’ GCE may occur in everyday learning situations apart from, sometimes as a result of, and often in spite of, prescribed ‘intentions.’ In almost all cases these processes take place within a power structure that may be shifted, reset or exacerbated by these ‘accidents.’ This introduction explores in detail how such misalignments can come to light in actual practices via an emic approach that can inform, challenge, or change our dominant conceptualizations of GCE. Ultimately, the editors explain, such an approach can inform robust debate not only on what GCE *should* or *could* be, but also on what it *is*.

As we are writing this introduction, the world is faced with a threat that knows no borders, no passports, and, arguably, no skin color. A virus that we still know too little about has taken the planet by storm, revealing once more the complex and unequal geopolitical, economic, and social interdependencies that continue to structure our societies, despite all efforts towards equality and universal human rights. Calls for solidarity across borders, for global action, and a unified response against an

unseen enemy potentially threatening every human being have hardly ever been more visible and at the same time, perhaps, more vacuous. As national leaders stockpile essential medical supplies and promise *their* citizens (and *their* electorates) the first vaccine, the fastest flattened curve, and the tightest border, the limits of global citizenship have become even more obvious. The world map has become a dashboard showing (almost) in real-time the number of COVID-19 infections and death rates *per country*, a map configured around *national* borders despite the fact that a pandemic, by its very definition, is profoundly global. Indeed, a true end to the pandemic will require a global response. It appears that in times of emergency, one's first instinct is to nationalize the crisis, protect 'one's own,' and compare results, efforts, successes, with those of other nations. Where does that leave global-mindedness, global learning and, indeed, global citizenship?

### Our Purpose: Gesturing toward emic approaches to GCE

It is in this context that we call for a re-examination of global citizenship education and of how we research it, approaching the growing debates on the matter from a different angle. These debates use varying terminologies depending on their specific genealogies within scholarly or more practice-oriented communities. The term 'global education' has been the Cold-War precursor of GCE in US and UK academic circles (Gaudelli, 2016, p. 38) whereas 'global learning' (*globales Lernen*) has been the term used in German education science, originating in a developmental education pedagogical tradition (see Wintersteiner, Grobbauer, Diendorfer & Reitmair-Juarez, p. 27; Scheunpflug & Asbrand, 2006, p. 34). While recognizing that terminologies *do matter*, we will, however, not insist on making these differentiations from the outset. The purpose we have set out here is to initiate fresh debates by shifting the perspective from normative/top-down to bottom-up/practice-grounded accounts. Our use of the term 'global citizenship education,' in short GCE, in the title and in reference to oft-institutionalized top-down processes, is purely pragmatic with the reader's initial orientation in mind. More specifically, we use the term 'global citizenship education' to cover a very broad range of discussions, voices, and positionalities in a field of education that aims to nurture citizens of the world who understand themselves as such, with an acute awareness of global (in-)justices and the motivation to work towards improving the status quo. Moreover, the desideratum is that they do so free of specific definitions of what they are doing imposed on them 'from above.'<sup>1</sup>

The field of education research dealing with notions of global citizenship now requires a profound epistemological, ontological and methodological shift (Pashby et al., 2020). We suggest this can be done by drawing on emic narratives, discourses,

and practices to inform novel conceptualizations of GCE. In this special issue, these are presented in the form of what we have called ‘(auto-)ethnographic vignettes,’ which we understand as providing the ‘data’ from which insight for research can be drawn. These can be described as snapshots from fieldwork or self-reflexive observations or practices of GCE by different researchers in a variety of educational settings. The vignettes are followed by analytical reflections on them by scholars working in the field of GCE from different perspectives and with different approaches. Individual contributions can be read alone but the shift in perspective we are undertaking envisages taking stock of the publication as a whole. We have organized the texts into four mutually-informing sections: (i) this introduction, which explains the purpose and conceptual inspiration of the issue, as well as how our approach fits within, and speaks to, current debates on GCE; (ii) the data section, consisting of six (auto-)ethnographic vignettes; (iii) the analytical section, comprising five commentaries on the collection of vignettes by scholars in the field who engage with them from a range of theoretical and personal standpoints; and (iv) a conclusion, which reflects on the myriad of insights and perspectives debated in the special issue as well as the ‘intentions, power, and accidents’ inherent in producing a publication of this kind.

This special issue is thus an attempt to promote cross-disciplinary, cross-context dialogues, disruption and a break from tradition, also in the sense of disconnecting the data producer, the data collector, and data interpreter from one another, and attempting to view the same data from different epistemological and ontological positions. By bringing together such different methods of thinking about GCE (auto-ethnographic reflection, storytelling, snippets from a research diary, commentaries and reflections prompted by data vignettes) we also seek to make visible the process of knowledge production. The emic perspective, in this sense, is not just about ‘giving a voice’ to participants, but also about laying bare to scrutiny the role of the researcher in the process of constructing the perspective ‘from the ground up.’

The vignette contributions seek to reveal emic perspectives on global citizenship education as they unfold in classrooms, staffrooms, curricula, textbooks, teacher training programs and other sites in schools around the world and place them into a discussion with theory. This requires an iterative approach to understanding these perspectives that begins with, and returns to, observations of what is happening educationally ‘on the ground,’ while repeatedly looping in theories and definitions of global citizenship, thereby bringing the ‘local’ and ‘global’ into a productive dialogue. This approach avoids inadvertently solidifying new forms of top-down normativity and reproducing the very power relations that critical approaches aim to destabilize. Methodologically, this approach entails tracing circulations of ideas about global citizenship in various educational contexts, but also examining mani-

festations of the global in citizenship education, civics, history, and other related subjects which may not, at first glance, explicitly address ‘globality.’ Epistemologically, this requires us to be reflexive about our own positionality and power as researchers and educators, and reflect on our assumptions about what is and is not (education for) global citizenship. Ontologically, this approach enables us to be open to diverse forms of globality that are often obscured by internationally circulating policy norms that often originate in Western Europe or North America.

Conceptually, this means letting the data speak for themselves – to different audiences, with different agendas and different expectations – and thereby allowing for unexpected realizations about GCE to take us by surprise. These – and similar unplanned events along our research journey – constitute the ‘accidental’ paths to which our title refers. The approach we wish to further does not start with prior conceptualizations or models but rather from actual practices at ground level, presented to us through different interpretive lenses. Instead of building on normative concepts of what GCE *should* look like with the aim of matching these against actual practices, we turn the process around: We adopt an emic approach that *begins with* stories about how that which might be called global citizenship manifests, accidentally or intentionally, in both surprising and less surprising places, among different actors in the everyday educational context, and in differently situated practices. It is from these insights that we hope to be able to re-conceptualize the aims, purposes and normative underpinnings of GCE and initiate a productive exchange on these issues.

In other words, with this collection we wish to uncover the complexities that an emic approach presents to current GCE debates that focus most often on programmatic or pedagogical conceptions which may or may not ‘apply’ as intended to lived contexts. While what we call ‘intentional’ GCE is conventionally based on normative, top-down, predetermined and prescribed definitions of what education policy actors (national education ministries as well as supranational organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, Oxfam, etc.) deem to be a GCE agenda, we also acknowledge the existence of an ‘accidental’ GCE which may occur in everyday learning situations apart from, sometimes as a result of, and often in spite of, prescribed ‘intentions.’<sup>2</sup> In almost all cases these processes take place within a power structure that may (wittingly or unwittingly) be shifted, reset or exacerbated by these ‘accidents.’ It is the tensions, ambiguities and unequal power relations that arise at misalignments of the intended and unintended in education for global citizenship with which this special issue seeks to engage. How these bottom-up practices can inform, challenge, or change our dominant conceptualizations of GCE is the key question explored from various standpoints in analytical contributions to this issue. Our hope is that these reflections will inform further robust debate not only on what GCE *should* or *could* be, but also on what it *is*.

With this aim in mind, we hope to unveil connections and disconnections between various facets of GCE in different contexts and allow for fresh conceptualizations to emerge from this dialogue. This is not to deny the existence or usefulness of current approaches that contribute to our aims (as we outline below), but rather to rekindle the debate by allowing new types of conversations to unfold, between data and (self-reflexive) researchers, between data and others who have *not* collected the data, and/or between observers, readers, and data. This allows for the unexpected to become visible, for beautiful serendipities to occur, but also for blind spots to be identified and as yet unimaginable constellations to be illuminated.

### Our points of departure: Dissatisfactions with current GCE debates

The field of GCE research is both expanding and shrinking at the same time. It is expanding in terms of the flurry of new conceptual, political and pedagogical work relevant to it (e.g. Torres, 2017; Reimers, 2020) as well as current moves to broaden the practical, everyday, aesthetic and dialogic horizons on which GCE is based (e.g. Gaudelli, 2016; Misiaszek, 2020; Bosio, 2021). Meta-analyses of GCE concepts, tracing their histories and discursive instantiations as well as the power dynamics in the making, implementing, and evaluating of GCE agendas (whatever form they may take – e.g. OECD, UNESCO) are in full bloom (e.g. Sälzer & Roczen, 2018; Vaccari & Gardinier, 2019; VanderDussen Toukan, 2018; Adick, 2018a), while critical, decolonial approaches are ever more hotly debated.<sup>3</sup> It is at the same time shrinking in terms of the drive to map the field through systematic and thematic overviews (Goren & Yemini, 2017; Yemini, Goren & Maxwell, 2018; Yemini, Tibbitts & Goren, 2019), bridging parallel traditions and political instantiations (e.g. Tarozzi & Torres, 2016), clustering, categorizing, and typologizing current approaches (e.g. Pashby et al., 2020; Oxley & Morris, 2013). All these serve to de-complexify and bring order to this ‘messy’ field. Both trends are important and necessary. They show a certain maturity that the field has reached, but also possible dead-ends if novel cross-disciplinary perspectives fail to be brought into relief.

Two key developments seem particularly relevant for the discussion we would like to (continue to) have about GCE: one is about power and privilege; the other about the gap between policy and practice.<sup>4</sup> Our first point of departure is therefore the discussion about power and privilege that warrants lively debate and heated arguments, but in our view falls short of empirical prowess. Problematizing relations of power and privilege and focusing on questions such as ‘whose citizenship?’ and ‘whose global?’ aims at moving from dominant approaches to GCE, often anchored in a global north/western perspective, towards decolonized understandings (see Abdi, Shultz & Pillay, 2015; Andreotti, 2011; Marshall, 2011; Pashby, 2011;

Scheunpflug, 2014). The critique that dominant notions of GCE are skewed towards western perspectives is solidifying in the field and takes issue, *inter alia*, with the genealogy of the concepts of global citizenship which rest in the western, white, ‘enlightened’ world, from Greece to Kant, and the political cosmopolitanism that selectively serves the world’s citizens. These universalizing ideals have been transformed into GCE agendas by powerful, western-embedded institutions such as Oxfam, UNESCO, OECD and others, and now purport to apply to ‘the rest’ of the world in a universalizing fashion. Much of the recent discursive analytical work in the field lays bare the situatedness of dominant forms of GCE in a particular context of western enlightenment entangled with a colonial past, and problematizes its universal aspirations. It is also noticeable that the contexts on which much of existing scholarship draws when examining practices or discourses of global citizenship in education also predominantly invoke western or global north experiences (Goren & Yemini, 2017). It is therefore not surprising that the content (e.g. values, knowledge, skills) underlying dominant GCE agendas is also predominantly ‘western.’ Lynne Parmenter (2011) explains this problem as resulting from the situatedness of knowledge production about GCE (not just of its contents). It is mostly western-born or western-situated academics, with access to resources and writing in English, who have the means to produce and distribute knowledge about what they deem GCE to stand for. As a result, Parmenter notes,

There are still billions of unheard voices, and many thousands of ideas, opinions and valuable contributions to theories and practices of global citizenship education to be made by those who are affected in some way or another by the concerns of global citizenship education. (Parmenter, 2011, p. 378)

Significant calls to historicize this situatedness and consequently decenter/decolonize GCE have been around for about a decade and they have been multiplying in recent years. A special issue of the journal *Globalisation, Societies and Education* edited by Vanessa Andreotti in 2011 was among the first systematic collections that critically unraveled the various facets of the (geo-)political economies of GCE in various locations around the world. Ensuing edited collections (e.g. Andreotti & Souza’s 2012 ‘Postcolonial perspectives on global citizenship education,’ and Abdi et al.’s 2015, ‘Decolonizing global citizenship education’) include chapters on marginalized concepts, philosophies or systems of thought that could inform work in this field (e.g. Ubuntu, Buddhist understandings of ‘self,’ ‘indigenous,’ and ‘aboriginal’ perspectives) in an attempt to challenge the self-proclaimed universality of western humanist systems of knowledge as the basis of dominant GCE. A special issue of the journal *Compare* (2018, 48[3]) examined constructs of democratic citizenship education in non-western contexts as a way to provide further impetus to a decolonized agenda of GCE (see Kovalchuk & Rapoport, 2018). The most recent developments

call for ontological, not just methodological or epistemological change: We need to learn how to *be* otherwise and understand the limits of our own imaginations before we can learn to *do* and *know* otherwise (Andreotti, Biesta & Ahenakew, 2015; Andreotti et al., 2018; Pashby et al., 2020).

Calls for ‘epistemic justice’ and ‘polycentric reconstruction’ of GCE (Abdi et al., 2015, p. 20) remain, however, not without critics, who point for example to different ‘traps’ of decolonizing GCE, e.g. misreading the epistemological (Horsthemke, 2017), essentializing (Culp, 2020), ahistoricism (Vickers, 2020) or relativism (Drerup, 2019). We note far less debate, however, with regards to actual *practices* of GCE on the ground and from subaltern positions. A bottom-up perspective on GCE remains largely underexplored and the heated conceptual debates on the matter are barely informed by testimonials or approaches based on on-the-ground experience.

This brings us to our second point of departure: our dissatisfaction with current debates around policies and practices of GCE. Beyond the decolonizing critiques reviewed above, which also have started to inform discussions in pedagogy and education science about how global citizenship *should* and *could* be taught in actual classrooms, there is also a strand of research firmly anchored in comparative education and in sociological and anthropological traditions that investigates ideas of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism as an educational (policy) trend. In this work, contents (e.g. curricula, textbooks, policy documents) and implementation of GCE agendas (e.g. in classroom practices, teachers’ or students’ opinions) in different national contexts are compared. Results almost invariably show that GCE policies and pedagogies cannot be merely imposed in a top-down fashion. Time and again studies show either that policy implementation (or what many call practice) almost always fails to live up to normative, vaguely defined and poorly understood programmatic concepts, or that these concepts take on a life of their own, completely disconnected from the everyday of students. For example, they become normalized (institutionalized) in authoritative educational texts which end up converging transnationally with little connection to national or local idiosyncrasies. Ample evidence for this is offered by cross-national studies of textbooks and curricula, for instance, in the neo-institutionalist tradition (see, e.g.: Bromley, 2009; Ramirez & Meyer, 2012; Moon & Koo, 2011; Jimenez, Lerch & Bromley, 2017). Although legitimated discursively, the ideals diffused through educational texts articulating an intended curriculum or purpose of schooling have little everyday relevance for protagonists of the educational act (see Rapoport, 2010 on teachers in the USA; Rapoport, 2017 on students in the USA; and Yemini & Furstenburg, 2018 on students in Israel). There is (still) too little work that looks at ground-level practices and takes a bottom-up approach that does not define GCE from the beginning but lets it emerge from below, from the discourses and practices mobilized in everyday contexts.

A notable exception is a slowly emerging strand of work which offers insight into everyday practices or negotiations of GCE that do not always fit the top-down model. Parmenter (2011) notes how providing different empirical bases for exploring conceptions of what it means to be a global citizen can reveal the gulf between theories of GCE and the real world. In a survey of students' opinions from a variety of global contexts collected in different languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Thai) she found that not only western values of human rights (which are often equated with GCE in the dominant research paradigm) but also 'human beingness,' 'connectedness,' 'engagement,' and 'transformation' were mentioned by participants. She also discovered that key areas of debate in scholarly work on GCE (such as for instance the national/global dichotomy) found no echo in everyday conceptions of being a global citizen. Similarly, Akar started from the reported perceptions of young people in Lebanon and argued for an approach that builds methodologically on "self-reporting, reflection and discussions of experiences" (2018, p. 414) to reframe citizenship beyond the dominant narratives that have emerged from Western Europe and North America. Insight from studies of young people engaged in various programs enacting global citizenship on the ground was offered in several volumes of the journal ZEP (e.g. Rieckmann, 2007 on informal global learning in the German higher education sector) with a special issue edited by Sabine Lang, Annette Scheunpflug, and Gregor Lang-Wojtasik (1/2018) specifically focusing on empirical studies of global learning juxtaposing a variety of global settings. Szakács-Behling, Bock, Keßler, Macgilchrist, and Spielhaus (2021) drew on a multi-sited qualitative study in German schools abroad in various world regions, conceptualized as 'transnational educational spaces' (Adick, 2005, 2018b; Hornberg, 2010, 2014) that are particularly well suited for investigating GCE on the ground (see also Keßler & Szakács-Behling, 2020). By using Oxley & Morris' (2013) comprehensive typology of conceptions of global citizenship, they found that practices and discourses of GCE observed in different German schools abroad are patterned according to common characteristics that cut across regional boundaries, but are not easily amenable to theoretical typologies. These findings cast serious doubt on the usefulness of applying normative concepts, theories, policies or educational programs to practices. In an edited volume, Misiaszek (2020) also explores GCE from several (including aesthetic) perspectives by blending together 'new colors' of GCE: i.e. contributions from the global north and global south, or everyday interactions and discursive constructs that are mixed in imaginative ways, enriching the field. Gaudelli (2016) goes further in that he not only explores ground-level GCE practices in various global contexts but also builds on these to introduce a new concept into the debate. In his view, GCE is impossible to pin down to a single definition but can rather be seen as a bricolage of meanings with specific subjectivities, temporalities

and geographies. While differentiating, like Oxley & Morris (2013), between various concepts of global citizenship and global citizenship education agendas that may be variously influenced by these concepts, Gaudelli chooses to speak of GCE as ‘everyday’ and ‘transcendent’ at the same time; his understanding of GCE brings together a desired, habitualized practice within the everyday of schooling coupled with a utopian, idealistic element that points to GCE’s inevitably progressive or emancipatory potential (Gaudelli, 2016, p. 50).

This special issue attempts to build on and continue these developments which problematize dominant accounts of GCE not only in the sense of listening to ‘non-western’ and marginalized voices in defining GCE normatively, but also by adopting everyday perspectives that remain close to lived experience and can become generative for further developing conceptual debates. At the same time, we are advocating a methodological decolonization that disrupts and complements the very process of generating insight through enabling novel forms of dialogue. But even more than this, we would like to spark debate based more firmly on actual practices taking place on the ground, not only in order to illuminate these, but also to contribute to and inform further conceptual and theoretical refinement.

### Our inspiration and contributions

Like the authors of Emiliano Bosio’s ‘conscientising,’ experience-based, and reflective conversations on GCE in the university sector (2021), we too are convinced that we cannot develop pedagogical ways to ‘globalize’ education without turning the mirror on ourselves, our teaching practices, and our research itself.

We are inspired by the work of Abdi et al. (2015) who call for ‘epistemic equity’ by giving voice to under-represented perspectives in *producing* knowledge about GCE. But beyond this desideratum, we also want to multiply the spaces and means of *distribution* and *consumption* of GCE knowledge, experiences and practices. We want to contribute to an increasingly dialogic and collective dimension of GCE, a non-conventional account of it not simply as a ‘product’ but rather as a permanent ‘becoming’ – a process, a living organism – with a strong utopian element that both reveals and conceals the limits of the (im-)possible (see Wintersteiner et al., 2015, pp. 2–13). We therefore understand the calls to decolonize GCE as more than a plea for ‘epistemological diversity’ (as Horsthemke, 2017 does); we *also* take them as inspiration to diversify our gaze toward and approach to GCE in everyday contexts. We wish to overcome precisely this epistemological monoculturalism of the field (Parmenter, 2011, p. 369) by looking at data from different viewpoints and mobilizing different theoretical perspectives, and we seek to encourage and enable robust

debate grounded in snippets of actual research practices to complement existing normative or pedagogical approaches.

In line with the aims of the special issue of the *British Journal of Education Studies* which points to the importance of considering “a wide array of contextual factors that shape [GCE’s] manifestations and goals” (Yemini et al., 2018, p. 430) and rendering visible connections between existing concepts and theoretical influences, we also aim to contribute to the continual process of complexification of the field not only as a field of academic study but also as a field of practice. The bottom-up (*emic*) approach we propose is not meant to dethrone or replace the top-down (*etic*) variant, as we seek not only to expand into uncharted conceptual territories but also to promote a methodological shift. The academic field of GCE is fraught with normative conceptions and political agendas and often remains disconnected from the field of practice. It is inherently concerned with identifying ‘best practices’ and discerning ‘what works.’ This emphasis on pragmatism falls short when trying to understand how and why interventions fail, serendipitous or unexpected ‘successes’ come about, or simply what is actually going on ‘on the ground’ and why.

We do not wish to throw the baby out with the bathwater: *emic* and *etic* perspectives need to be balanced; in fact, they should converse with each other (see Morris, Leung, Ames & Lickel, 1999). Our plea for an *emic* approach is more of a plea for a balancing act, given that in our view the perspective from the ground is still, curiously enough, in its infancy. Too much of the existing literature relies on fixed precepts and falls into one of two conundrums: either it becomes too normative (whether it argues for western or non-western, for decolonial, critical, or dominant/legitimized paradigms) and focuses too much on what *should* be the content of GCE with little reflection on *how* it could be, or already is, brought about; or it builds on various pre-existing normative conceptualizations when looking at practices and everyday encounters, school contexts, etc. with a view to checking one against the other. These approaches find themselves at a dead-end when they argue either that it is a case of failed implementation or that one-size-fits-all measures cannot work in the variety of contexts where GCE pedagogies are seen as imperative. But this constant comparison between policy and practice is in our view counterproductive. It more often than not starts from a predominantly *etic*, and therefore short-sighted, view. The researcher, educationist, or activist is generally trained to look at practice through the lenses of predefined concepts, however simple or complex, however ‘western,’ ‘non-western,’ or critical these may be. We do not claim that this is a futile endeavor; indeed, the lenses of our glasses have a useful function and without them our vision may be impaired. The point, however, is that we should: 1. acknowledge the glasses (which many researchers already do); 2. be prepared to take them off and replace them with other glasses; 3. be open to discussion with the bearers of

other glasses about the experience and what this does to the data realities we are examining.

The emic perspective is, in this sense, not a renunciation of our own glasses in order to replace them with those of everyday actors in various sociopolitical contexts, because it may simply be that those glasses would never fit us. It is, rather, a recognition of the glasses' existence and an attempt to understand what they may do to our perspective, how they might influence what we choose to see and how we could benefit from this realization in pushing the field forward. In other words, we argue that the emerging perspective from the ground should not stop short of bringing together a wealth of insights in order to advance a fresh conceptual approach to GCE that contributes to the continuing and diversifying conversations already opening up in the field (for example, Bosio, 2021). What these new assemblages reveal to us, and how we can move GCE forward from this, remains to be seen. We hope that this special issue with its innovative format may occasion a vigorous, self-reflexive and critical debate on the field of GCE and its knowledge production.

### Overview of the special issue

The vignettes represent a wide swath of geographical and topical diversity. They take us to schools in five different world regions (Africa, North America, Central America, Europe, and the Middle East) and seven different countries (South Africa, Germany, Ethiopia, Israel, the United States, Costa Rica, and Albania), where various participants enter the scene: ethics teachers, refugees, former apartheid fighters, transnationally mobile parents and students, post-socialist social activists, and self-reflexive educators. The vignettes also encompass a wide array of different kinds of institutions: public schools, private schools and universities as well as a street protest. Although, notably, none of the vignettes is set in what might be considered an informal context of education, they all consider the informality that underlies formal educational processes and pay particular attention to what might be considered the hidden curriculum as well as the often surprising transformations that occur in relationships between teacher and students and among students. Most importantly, the vignettes attend to the contested histories and contentious politics inherent in the subject matter being taught and learned. They address a series of issues, including immigration and diversity (Gräfe-Geusch), development and neoliberal economics (Riggan), social justice, civil rights, and human rights (Gardinier, Robinson), cosmopolitan values (Levenson), and peace education (Kertyzia). All these are at the heart of Global Citizenship Education even though teaching the latter was not necessarily the explicit intention of the education systems, teachers, or curricula in these contexts.

Reading the vignettes together unveils a tapestry of paradoxes and ambivalences. GCE emerges where you least expect it, and it is almost always intersected by power relations. A critical GCE which lays bare privilege and systemic inequality seems to resonate more strongly in milieus where injustice is more visible in everyday life. ‘Softer’ versions of ‘global citizenry,’ on the other hand, seem to prevail where power is taken for granted such that it goes unnoticed, rendering a critical confrontation with the privileged self deeply uncomfortable.

The commentaries on the vignettes are as diverse in perspective as the vignettes are in geographical and topical scope. A productive tension among these reflections emerges when what we call *emancipatory normativity* confronts the kinds of emic approaches promoted through the vignettes and this special issue. The emic approaches recognize that GCE *is* happening all around us all the time, all around the world (even without capital letters), simply by virtue of the fact that the vast majority of human beings alive today are aware that they are positioned globally in some way and are constantly learning about and from this positioning. Concurrently, formal education is a widespread occurrence which plays a critical role in situating us globally. Understanding the ubiquity and diversity of processes of GCE inherently pushes back against the normativity that exists in the field.

While all of the commentaries engage with the emic nature of the vignettes, some also embrace, and deepen our awareness of, the importance of learning from this emic or ‘bottom up’ perspective. These reflections note the capacity of the emic perspective to engage in reflexivity, casting a critical light on our own positionalities as researchers (Yemini) and unveiling the alienating nature of the normative stance promoted in many GCE initiatives, competencies, programs, and policies (Gaudelli). Other contributions promote, defend or take for granted both the emancipatory nature of GCE and the normative tools that often promote emancipation (Rieckmann; Lang-Wojtasik & Oza).

We, the editors of this special issue, firmly believe in the emancipatory potential of GCE even as we call for critical reflection on the power dynamics involved in defining *emancipation* and interrogating the norms that hold these definitions in place. We believe it is *also* important to engage with perspectives that promote emancipatory normativity. In order to emphasize these distinct contributions, we have ordered the reflections along this axis from normative-emancipatory to reflexive, reflective and emic. Finally, and to bring this special issue full circle, we conclude with a brief reflection of our own on the commentaries and the particular ‘intentions, power, and accidents’ that brought this publication into being.

## Notes

1. Broadly in line with Richard Falk's understanding of the global citizen as one who engages intellectually and in action beyond one's political borders to fulfil the utopia of a better world (Falk, 1993, pp. 41–46).
2. An important distinction is made between formal, non-formal and informal education (Adick, 2018b, p. 125). What we refer to as 'intentional GCE' could match the 'formal' and what we call 'accidental GCE' the 'informal' because of the unintended character of the latter. However, given that our approach starts from situated practices rather than didactic approaches, we rather maintain that intentional aspects of GCE can also be revealed in non-formal education spaces where a GCE agenda is in place, for example through extra-curricular activities, while unintentional or accidental GCE could also occur in formal education – for example when unintended consequences of a formal curricular agenda that does not have GCE as its explicit aim *also* happen to enable global learning, global-mindedness, or global action.
3. See issue 7 of the journal *On Education. Journal for Research and Debate* (April 2020, available at [https://www.oneducation.net/no-07\\_april-2020/editorial-7/](https://www.oneducation.net/no-07_april-2020/editorial-7/)), as well as the ongoing discussions in ZEP, in particular issue 4/2019.
4. Both were vigorously debated during the International Summer School 2019 on 'Global Citizenship Education and Citizenship Education in a Changing World: Normative and Pedagogical Challenges' of the Georg Arnhold Program on Education for Sustainable Peace, held at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick, Germany.

## References

- Abdi, A.A., Shultz, L. & Pillay, T. (Eds.). (2015). *Decolonizing global citizenship education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-277-6>
- Adick, C. (2005). Transnationalisierung als Herausforderung für die Internationale und Interkulturell Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft. *Tertium Comparationis*, 11(2), 243–269.
- Adick, C. (2018a). Die Bildungsagenda der Vereinten Nationen aus dem Blickwinkel der internationalen Bildungsforschung. *Zeitschrift für Internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik*, 41(2), 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.31244/zep.2018.02.03>
- Adick, C. (2018b). Transnational education in schools, universities, and beyond: Definitions and research areas. *Transnational Social Review*, 8(2), 124–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2018.1463057>
- Akar, B. (2018). Reframing approaches to narrating young people's conceptualisations of citizenship in education research. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 48(3), 414–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1396532>
- Andreotti, V. de O. (2011). The political economy of global citizenship education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9(3/4), 307–310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2011.602292>
- Andreotti, V. de O., Biesta, G. & Ahenakew, C. (2015). Between the nation and the globe: Education for global mindedness in Finland. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 13(2), 246–259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2014.934073>
- Andreotti, V. de O. & Souza, L.M.T.M. de (Eds.). (2012). *Postcolonial perspectives on Global Citizenship Education*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203156155>
- Andreotti, V. de O., Stein, S., Sutherland, A., Pashby, K., Susa, R. & Amsler, S. (2018). Mobilizing different conversations about global justice in education: Toward alternative futures in uncertain times. *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review*, 26, 9–41.

- Bosio, E. (Ed.). (2021). *Conversation on global citizenship education: Perspectives on research, teaching, and learning in higher education*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429346897>
- Bromley, P. (2009). Cosmopolitanism in civic education: Exploring cross-national trends, 1970–2008. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 12(1), 33–44.
- Culp, J. (2020). Provincializing ‘the West’ by essentializing ‘the East’? *On Education. Journal for Research and Debate*, 3(7). [https://doi.org/10.17899/on\\_ed.2020.7.2](https://doi.org/10.17899/on_ed.2020.7.2)
- Drerup, J. (2019). The West and the Rest? Zur postkolonialen Kritik an Global Citizenship Education. *Zeitschrift für Internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik*, 42(4), 4–11. <https://doi.org/10.31244/zep.2019.04.02>
- Falk, R. (1993). The making of global citizenship. In J. Brecher, J.B. Childs & J. Cutler (Eds.), *Global visions: Beyond the new world order* (pp. 39–50). Boston: South End Press.
- Gaudelli, W. (2016). *Global citizenship education: Everyday transcendence*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315683492>
- Goren, H. & Yemini, M. (2017). Global citizenship education redefined – A systematic review of empirical studies on global citizenship education. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 82, 170–183. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2017.02.004>
- Hornberg, S. (2010). *Schule im Prozess der Internationalisierung von Bildung*. Münster: Waxmann.
- Hornberg, S. (2014). Transnational educational spaces: Border-transcending dimensions in education. In L. Vega (Ed.), *Empires, post-coloniality and interculturality* (pp. 171–180). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-731-5\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-731-5_11)
- Horsthemke, K. (2017). ‘Epistemological diversity’ in education: Philosophical and didactic considerations. *Forum Pedagogiczne*, 7(1), 261–278. <https://doi.org/10.21697/fp.2017.1.18>
- Jimenez, J.D., Lerch, J. & Bromley, P. (2017). Education for global citizenship and sustainable development in social science textbooks. *European Journal of Education*, 52(4), 460–476. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12240>
- Keßler, C.I. & Szakács-Behling, S. (2020). Researching the transnational and transnationalizing the research: Towards a methodological turn in education. In C. Machold, A. Messerschmidt & S. Hornberg (Eds.), *Jenseits des Nationalen? Erziehung und Bildung im Spannungsverhältnis von Entgrenzung nationaler Ordnungen* (pp. 183–199). Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv10h9f9r.13>
- Kovalchuk, S. & Rapoport, A. (2018). Democratic citizenship education in non-western contexts: Implications for theory and research. *Compare*, 48(3), 339–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2018.1445964>
- Marshall, H. (2011). Instrumentalism, ideals and imaginaries: Theorising the contested space of global citizenship education in schools. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9(3/4), 411–426. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2011.605325>
- Misiaszek, L.I. (Ed.). (2020). *Exploring the complexities in global citizenship education: Hard spaces, methodologies, and ethics*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315180397>
- Moon, R.J. & Koo, J. (2011). Global citizenship and human rights: A longitudinal analysis of social studies and ethics textbooks in the Republic of Korea. *Comparative Education Review*, 55(4), 574–599. <https://doi.org/10.1086/660796>
- Morris, M.W., Leung, K., Ames, D. & Lickel, B. (1999). Views from inside and outside: Integrating emic and etic insights about culture and justice judgment. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4), 781–796. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1999.2553253>

- Oxley, L. & Morris, P. (2013). Global Citizenship: A typology for distinguishing its multiple conceptions. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61(3), 301–325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2013.798393>
- Parmenter, L. (2011). Power and place in the discourse of global citizenship education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9(3/4), 367–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2011.605322>
- Pashby, K. (2011). Cultivating global citizens: Planting new seeds or pruning the perennials? Looking for the citizen-subject in global citizenship education theory. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9(3/4), 427–442. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2011.605326>
- Pashby, K., da Costa, M., Stein, S. & Andreotti, V. (2020). A meta-review of typologies of global citizenship education. *Comparative Education*, 56(2), 144–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2020.1723352>
- Ramirez, F.O. & Meyer, J.W. (2012). Toward post-national societies and global citizenship. *Multicultural Education Review*, 4(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23770031.2009.11102887>
- Rapoport, A. (2010). We cannot teach what we don't know: Indiana teachers talk about global citizenship education. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 5(3), 179–190. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197910382256>
- Rapoport, A. (2017). Perception of global citizenship among international participants of study abroad programs. *World Studies in Education*, 18(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.7459/wse/18.1.02>
- Reimers, F.M. (2020). *Educating students to improve the world*. Singapore: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3887-2>
- Rieckmann, M. (2007). Globales Lernen in informellen Settings an Hochschulen. *Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik*, 30(1), 7–10.
- Sälzer, C. & Roczen, N. (2018). Assessing global competence in PISA 2018: Challenges and approaches to capturing a complex construct. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 10(1), 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.18546/IJDEGL.10.1.02>
- Scheunflug, A. (2014). Globales Lernen und die Debatte um Postkolonialität: Kommentar. *Zeitschrift für Internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik*, 37(4), 31–32.
- Scheunflug, A. & Asbrand, B. (2006). Global education and education for sustainability. *Environmental Education Research*, 12(1), 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620500526446>
- Szakács-Behling, S., Bock, A., Keßler, C.I., Macgilchrist, F. & Spielhaus, R. (2021). Global citizenship in motion: Comparing cross-border practices in German schools abroad. In E. Klerides & S. Carney (Eds.), *Identities and education: Comparative perspectives in times of crisis* (pp. 95–116). London: Bloomsbury. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350141322.ch-005>
- Tarozzi, M. & Torres, C.A. (2016). *Global citizenship education and the crises of multiculturalism comparative perspectives*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Torres, C.A. (2017). *Theoretical and empirical foundations of critical global citizenship education*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315452579>
- Vaccari, V. & Gardinier, M.P. (2019). Toward one world or many? A comparative analysis of OECD and UNESCO global education policy documents. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 11(1), 68–86. <https://doi.org/10.18546/IJDEGL.11.1.05>
- VanderDussen Toukan, E. (2018). Educating citizens of 'the global': Mapping textual constructs of UNESCO's global citizenship education 2012–2015. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 13(1), 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197917700909>

- Vickers, E. (2020). Critiquing coloniality, ‘epistemic violence’ and western hegemony in comparative education – The dangers of ahistoricism and positionality. *Comparative Education*, 56(2), 165–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2019.1665268>
- Wintersteiner, W., Grobbauer, H., Diendorfer, G. & Reitmair-Juarez, S. (2015). *Global citizenship education: Citizenship education for globalizing societies*. Klagenfurt: Zentrum für Friedensforschung und Friedenspädagogik.
- Yemini, M. & Furstenburg, S. (2018). Students’ perceptions of global citizenship at a local and an international school in Israel. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 48(6), 715–733. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2017.1418835>
- Yemini, M., Goren, H. & Maxwell, C. (2018). Global citizenship education in the era of mobility, conflict and globalisation. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 66(4), 423–432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2018.1533103>
- Yemini, M., Tibbitts, F. & Goren, H. (2019). Trends and caveats: Review of literature on global citizenship education in teacher training. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 77, 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.09.014>