'Billions of unheard voices':
Concluding thoughts on an unexpected journey

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Abstract

The editors refer back to the quotation from Parmenter (2011, p. 378) cited in the introduction of this special issue, noting the potential of an emic approach to 'give a voice' to more participants in the education process, whether as educators, policymakers, parents, or students. This concluding paper brings the dialogic format full circle with the editors' own reflections on the diverse analyses and observations that have come together in this special issue. Of particular interest, and following on from the objectives set out in the introduction, is how the commentaries relate to each other and how they position themselves in relation to the purpose of sparking new debates on global citizenship education from an emic perspective.

In our introduction to this special issue we cited Lynne Parmenter (2011, p. 378), who notes the "billions of unheard voices, and many thousands of ideas, opinions and valuable contributions" to this field that are still to be made by those "affected in some way or another" by Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and the questions with which it grapples. In the third decade of the twenty-first century, this probably encompasses all human beings, but what Parmenter was certainly underlining was the importance of what GCE *is in actual practice* being voiced, and that there are billions of different ways in which that could be done. While a special issue such as this can only give voice to a few, it is our hope that the contributions presented here might inspire further, different, emic approaches equally focusing on actual practice rather than prescribed norms. The diversity of perspectives from which the commen-

taries engage with the vignettes show that, ultimately, education for global citizenship can be a very personal, subjective experience for student, educator and researcher alike.

In these concluding thoughts, therefore, we seek to bring the dialogic format full circle with our own reflections on the diverse analyses and observations that have come together in this special issue. Of particular interest, and following on from the objectives set out in the introduction, is how the commentaries relate to each other and how they position themselves in relation to our purpose of sparking new debates on global citizenship education from an emic perspective.

Beginning with the reflection by Lang-Wojtasik and Oza, this piece provides a perspective from both the Global North and the Global South. The authors embrace many core norms of GCE *and* critique these same concepts as Eurocentric. They explore the origins and evolution of cosmopolitanism and human rights, noting that these foundational concepts (along with Global Education itself), have the potential to be decolonial and anti-colonial despite their Eurocentric legacies. They note the importance of global initiatives such as Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and an array of other Global Education programs. Lang-Wojtasik and Oza's perspective might be seen as an important critique to some of the premises in this special issue. They suggest that we do not need to abandon our normative tools in order to achieve liberation. Rather, we may arrive at a liberatory, decolonial Global Citizenship Education by utilizing normative tools for emancipatory ends, developing institutions to do decolonial work, and holding them accountable for addressing power imbalances on one hand, and embracing diverse localities on the other. They also make a case for a more profound focus on the local. We find their concluding question to be a provocative one: "And is it enough to talk about the global when it comes to the question of (world) citizenship or is the local an indispensable counterpart? Should we not rather be talking about *Glocal* Citizenship Education?"

Marco Rieckmann's commentary also emphasizes normative tools. He takes up what we might think of as a competency-based approach to GCE, summarizing the core competencies and laying out an agenda for promoting these. He argues for a whole institution approach which focuses not only on individual actions but structural changes to the way educational institutions work. He also calls for us to look outside formal education to informal spaces where education occurs and, quite rightly, points out that these vignettes do not do so. By focusing on five key elements of GCE, Rieckmann argues that GCE should be transformative (in terms of changing unequal power relations into belonging), emancipatory, oriented toward whole institutional change (rather than merely teaching, learning, and pedagogy), focused on structural change, and attentive to informal educational spaces and processes. Like

Lang-Wojtasik and Oza, Rieckmann centralizes emancipation and transformation as core goals of GCE and promotes normative tools (competencies in this case) with which to do so.

Christel Adick's contribution provides us with a hinge between commentaries that orient their analysis around emancipatory normativity and the reflexive commentaries that follow. She first notes the tendency towards educationalization (*Pädagogisierung*) which has coincided with the universalization of formal education. Educationalization might be thought of as the carving out of a prescriptive and prescribed role for pedagogical solutions to societal problems. GCE has certainly become 'educationalized' and much of the impetus for GCE to be both normative and emancipatory derives from this process of educationalization. As a means to counterbalance this trend, Adick calls us to take an approach that we consider to be more iterative using what she refers to as the 'didactic triangle' to make sense of the vignettes. Drawing on the German concepts of *Bildung* and *Didaktik*, Adick's notion of the didactic triangle provides us with a frame that is processual, iterative, and loops together levels of intervention and interaction as they pertain to GCE. In order to analyze the vignettes, she develops a typology that links the level of decision-making with the area of 'didactical discourse' to schematically capture the iterative and processual flow between and across these levels. She concludes by noting the forms of 'upward reasoning' in the vignettes. This is an important observation given that a critical component of privileging the emic is to upwardly reason, or theorize, from this vantage point. The local cannot remain isolated, nor can the emic remain relegated 'at the bottom' in research, in policy or in practice. Indeed, upward reasoning might be seen as a counterbalance to the top-down normativity often found in GCE.

William Gaudelli's commentary provides us with a different theory that enables us to 'upwardly reason' from the vignettes to GCE. Gaudelli brings in Critical Everyday Theory (Lefebvre) and its core concepts: estrangement, alienation, and novelty. A focus on alienation raises the implicit question of whether GCE, when *educationalized*, and therefore decontextualized, generalized and universalized, is alienating. Does the normative form of GCE connect students to 'the globe' or estrange them from it? He points out several instances of estrangement and alienation in the vignettes. For example, he explores the alienating effect of teaching South African students about the Holocaust (Robinson) and teaching Ethiopian students about saving money in a bank (Riggan). These and other examples in the vignettes are alienating in that they attempt to bring 'foreign' concepts (economics, human rights) to bear on everyday experiences, thereby superimposing the global and potentially altering these students' understanding of their own lives and histories and alienating them from what is intimate and personal and local. Seen through the lens

of Critical Everyday Theory, one might question whether the whole concept of Global Citizenship Education is not inevitably alienating or estranging.

Miri Yemini's reflection is perhaps the most autoethnographic and reflective in its approach. In this way, it mirrors our own approach to this volume and so we conclude the special issue with Yemini's commentary as a way to bookend our work here. Rather than offering a theoretical framework or model, she joins us in reflecting on her own positionality as a migrant and scholar of GCE. Through reflection on her own mobility, she articulates the tensions between cosmopolitanism and belonging. While cosmopolitanism might indeed be seen as a modality of belonging, it is conventionally thought about as based on a particular power dynamic – a capacity to move freely with a certain command of the world. Belonging, on the other hand, is more expansive, but unlike cosmopolitanism it raises questions such as: belonging to what? Notions of belonging can be narrow or global in scope and everything in between; they are politically inflected.

Yemini's commentary closes with a discussion of the different meanings of GCE for Arab Palestinian, Jewish religious and Jewish secular teachers in Israeli schools. Each group of teachers was keenly aware of the politics surrounding their global positionality; it framed their aspirations for themselves and their students. This awareness shaped – and politicized – their stance towards GCE. This discussion demonstrates the ways in which global and local politics inflect perceptions (and therefore practices) of GCE in very different ways, taking us back to our question of whether a truly emancipatory normative GCE is possible. We would argue that, in the third decade of the twenty-first century, *all* educational stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, etc.) are aware of their own global positionality. Furthermore, we would argue that this understanding of positionality is always politicized. Given this awareness, any top-down attempt at GCE will always be inflected by an awareness of these politics which begins locally but is always engaged in 'upward reasoning,' as Christel Adick calls it, to make sense of the texts, sub-texts and power dynamics infused in top-down norms.

Getting back to the purpose of this special issue, we too embarked on an unexpected journey of intentions, power, and accidents when we first met to discuss its design in the summer of 2019. Back then, debating freely over coffee in the conference rooms and corridors of the Georg Eckert Institute, little did we know that the publication process would be concluded in the midst of a global pandemic that would painfully remind us how a global awareness of power, control (or lack of such), and the fragility of human life and death on this planet can come knocking when we least expect it. Bringing together the contributions to this issue has meant becoming more aware of our own positionality and privilege in academic positions differently affected by the pandemic, and the limits of mostly northern and western-located chains

of knowledge production. Ultimately, and not least due to the pandemic and the restrictions to academic exchange it necessitated, we have disrupted these chains, we feel, to a lesser extent than we initially set out to do. Nevertheless, several of the contributions took us by surprise with the new paths they opened up vis-à-vis our original purpose of facilitating spaces in which emic perspectives on GCE might emerge. Our hope is that the mutual, transversal, and vivid conversations that the vignettes and reflections have brought together here in an unexpectedly hinged amalgam of perspectives will shed new light on the intentions, power, and accidents that are more or less visibly involved in GCE *as is*. This should allow us to reconsider not only how we think and how we feel about it, but also how we research it and, most of all, how we 'do' it in our everyday lives as researchers, educators, parents, and students.

Reference

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