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Global Citizenship Education under construction: Curriculum and didactics relating the bottom and the top

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Abstract

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) from an allegedly bottom-up approach – as presented in the vignettes in this issue – is viewed in this commentary through the lens of what these texts tell researchers about *the transmission of (G)CE at the bottom, i.e. in the classroom,* which is at the core of the German language tradition of *Didaktik.* My comments strive to show, firstly, that GCE by necessity comes 'under construction' as a result of any curriculum planning and didactics, including the co-constructive agency of teacher and students. While this may sound rather trivial (even though seldom empirically researched), it is suggested in this context that the 'didactics discourse' spans various global and local levels; it is enacted over different macro-, meso- and micro-steps each containing some relative autonomy, starting from the top world level to the bottom of each singular classroom. Secondly, it is posited that the (auto-)ethnographic vignettes not only contain the anticipated observations and narratives of GCE practices at the bottom, but also include what I have termed '*upward reasoning from bottom to top*'. There are numerous traces of such upward reasoning in the vignettes, some of which will be highlighted as illustrations. They show how each individual and very specific classroom teaching is connected to many intentions before, above and beyond the mere practice. It is this which makes the vignettes attractive for further research and at the same time relevant for teacher education.

The vignettes document a strong focus on GCE in schools – why?

The vignettes deal with (Global) Citizenship Education (GCE) in teaching and learning in a broad variety of countries, whereby most of them refer to schools, covering in particular schools in South Africa (Robinson), in Germany (Gräfe-Geusch), in Ethiopia (Riggan) and in Israel (Levenson); one vignette is devoted to GCE lecturing in higher education in the USA (Kertyzia); and another addresses GCE learning by student protest and activism 'on the streets' (Gardinier). This remarkable focus on

school or university teaching may be accidental, since in principle GCE can be and surely is (also) part of many out-of-school scenarios, e.g. in youth organizations and social work, in educational programs of non-governmental organizations or in adult and further education. But it may also be the product of the context in which the authors of these vignettes where recruited, which was, to my knowledge, an international conference on GCE which took place at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Germany. For a variety of reasons, all practice fields would need to be considered for deep insight into a bottom-up GCE approach. The point is that, for instance, young people participating in a voluntary work camp abroad are experiencing 'global learning' in situ, from which they form their ideas and attitudes towards global citizenship while at the same time interacting with local populations who also enlarge their worldviews on global affairs. And this 'informal education' might affect the lives of these persons much more than a few hours of human rights' teaching in school.

Notwithstanding the reason how this came about – whether by chance, as an effect of the conference, or as a reflection of social reality – this strong emphasis on teaching and learning in school-type educational institutions found in the vignettes, together with my own experiences in realms of school theory, motivates me to refer to *school theory, curriculum and didactics* in determining the added value of 'bottom-up' approaches for our scholarly knowledge about GCE. This, then, will be the *main perspective of my comments*, which means I will not argue with the eternal complaint of discrepancies between *program/policy vs. practice*, or resort to analyses of *loose coupling* or *decoupling* between world-cultural blueprints of GCE and national realizations so prominent in neo-institutionalist theory (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997), or highlight relations between *global concepts vs. local meanings* (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Instead, I will refer to an argument which seems to be forgotten or underrated in international discourse about the relationship between policies/programs in education and pedagogical practice: the existence and effects of the *relative pedagogical autonomy* of the school – and hence the teacher – embedded in reflections on defining the role of the school, especially concerning instruction and lesson planning. Because it was precisely this that struck me while reading the vignettes: *Most of them depict how and why 'relative autonomy' of the actors rooted in their being teachers in a national school system is at work.* I will, therefore, not concentrate on the possible match, deviations or contradictions of the *contents of GCE* in the vignettes as compared to declarations and discourse on GCE and neighboring concepts, but concentrate on how *the transmission of GCE(-like) topics* is said to have been enacted and is reported on in the vignettes.

The vignettes were written with the key terms of the publication in mind: intentions, power, and accidents: While international policies seeking to implement GCE

clearly operate ‘top-down,’ it is posited that discourse formation on GCE lacks and would benefit from ‘bottom-up’ perspectives. These might reveal intentions that are not met in practice, power relations that blur universal human rights perspectives, and accidental learning that might occur adjacent to, beyond or even instead of proclaimed teaching concepts. Hence, voices from the bottom are to be valued; they echo experiences from the other end of the top-down ladder, where GCE actually takes place. Reaching the classroom level is rather rare in research on international education, for which I just want to cite a stunning article reporting on teacher education in Finland based on Finnish and foreign students’ narratives, literally titled ‘‘I find it odd that people have to highlight other people’s differences – even when there are none’: Experiential learning and interculturality in teacher education’ (Dervin, 2017), thus exposing cleavages or even contradictions between pedagogical discourse and real life experiences.

National education systems officially combine the citizens’ right to education and the (ultimate) duty of the state to provide for and regulate its proclaimed education system. From this follows the assumption (and the vignettes echo this) that most – intended – GCE takes place as part of general education in schools. This, then, will be the starting point to view what the vignettes can contribute to researching GCE as it is mainly practiced in school.

GCE as part of universal compulsory education: A conceptual note

Schooling should in principle reach all children and young people because of compulsory education. In real life going to school occupies a major part of growing up and everyday experiences of girls and boys everywhere in the world, which was not yet the case a century or so ago. In my writings I reconstructed the logic of the worldwide expansion of schooling as a long transnational historical process which I termed ‘the universalization of modern schooling’ analyzed mainly as a corollary of the expansion of the modern capitalist world system as theorized by Immanuel Wallerstein (Adick, 1992a, 1992b). Grosso modo, I see the expansion of the ‘modern capitalist world system’ à la Wallerstein as the historical motor leading to what is now identified as ‘globalization.’ I have discussed the details of my argumentation concerning the allegedly ‘western’ or ‘universal’ nature of modern schooling elsewhere; suffice to say here that, in my view, the historical process of universalizing education is still ongoing today, as demonstrated by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) declared by the United Nations (UN) to be achieved by the year 2030 (Adick, 2018a). The SDGs include one goal out of 17 which is uniquely devoted to education (SDG 4), with a special sub-goal on the worldwide expansion of primary and secondary

education for all girls and boys (i.e. SDG 4.1). It also comprises a special goal which I read as a rather lengthy description of GCE:

> Knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity education and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. (SDG 4.7; cf. Adick, 2018b, p. 14)

I interpret this historical process as falling in line with notions of a theorem known in German discourse as "die *Pädagogisierung* der Welt" (Adick 2018a, pp. 119 ff.). I follow Depaepe (1998) who has written about *Pädagogisierung* by translating it into English as 'educationalization;' yet unlike him, I do not see this as a characteristic of 'western' school systems (alone), but as a universal trait which particularly affects schooling. To speak of *Pädagogisierung/educationalization* means that, over the course of time, ever more societal tasks and challenges were and are converted into pedagogical objectives and delegated to be performed or 'solved' by educational institutions, particularly by the school. Challenges and requirements posed by 'globalization' are thus transformed into demands to be fulfilled by education (hence, GCE) and are most prominently delegated to the national education system, the one most accessible to and malleable by official policymakers (in a top-down process). This is why it comes as no surprise that GCE is predominantly a topic for school education.

Following the idea of the *educationalization of globalization* ending up in school it can be observed that GCE is incorporated into national education systems in various ways, most often as part of existing syllabi and subject matters; but to my knowledge nowhere as a new and stand-alone subject. The vignettes display GCE in such various settings: History teaching at high-school level in South Africa (Robinson); Ethics education in secondary schools in Germany (Gräfe-Geusch); part of a newly introduced compulsory subject from primary through university level called 'Civic and Ethical Education' (CEE) in Ethiopia (Riggan); underlying the whole school philosophy of a Christian private school in Israel (Levenson). One of the remaining vignettes considers GCE in higher education, in this case university classes on Peace Education in the USA (Kertyzia). The other focuses on public student protests in Albania which might be interpreted as showing the results or outcomes of (intentional?) GCE teaching or learning (accidental?) in higher education. GCE may thus obviously cohabit with many different institutional and curricular arrangements which, among other aspects, makes it flexible in terms of implementation but also a rather fuzzy concept. I subsume this concept under the broader and more long-term umbrella of 'global education.'

Didactics: Curriculum and/or *Didaktik*?

In Anglophone literature, reflections concerning the choice of contents, aims and methods for the purposes of instruction in schools are usually referred to as 'curriculum,' whereas in German this would fall under the topic '*Didaktik*.' There is no real English equivalent for this German term (for which, however, there are equivalents in other European languages), because the English adjective 'didactic' tends to pejoratively mean (just) a more or less 'masterly' preparation of lessons by teachers. In the continental European tradition, however, the above-named reflections embrace much more than just lesson planning, also comprising the art of choosing, legitimizing, and structuring the contents and aims of instruction for the ultimate purpose of '*Bildung*.'[1] As has been shown by analyzing the international 'export' of the works of Wolfgang Klafki, probably the most widely known and influential post-Second World War German theorist of *Didaktik*, the considerable influence enjoyed by the term in a number of countries like Denmark, Poland, Russia, Japan, Korea and China contrasts sharply with its practically zero reception in the USA and in France (Meyer & Meyer, 2017, pp. 190 ff.).

For a better comprehension some clarifications on the German ideas around '*Bildung*' and '*Didaktik*' need to be touched upon here. Peter Menck (2000, pp. 11 ff.), attempting to explain '*Bildung*' to Anglophone audiences, defines it as "the process in the course of which specific human beings acquire the characteristic human features" (ibid., p. 13); in this, he relies mainly on the conceptual works of Wilhelm von Humboldt and Karl Marx. In his introduction to Menck's book, Ian Westbury, coming from the Anglophone tradition, adds to Menck's definition of '*Bildung*' thus:

> We appropriate the patterns of the world, which are, when all is said and done, the achievement and the products of humanity, so that 'humanity' penetrates our social and cultural nature and we become formed individual expressions of the human achievements we have experienced. This process of forming, and the subsequent formedness, is inevitably a *self*-formation: The form of my formedness emerges as I come to terms [with] and appropriate, in ways that penetrate my mind and heart, the worlds I inhabit and encounter. (Westbury, 2000, p. xiv)

Referring to the (rather limited) international discourse between 'curriculum' and *Didaktik* traditions, it may be said that 'curriculum' mainly focuses on processes and outcomes of learning in schools, whereas *Didaktik* primarily refers to questions of legitimate choice of contents and aims of teaching. The two traditions are not totally at odds with one another, but rather mutually overlapping (Westbury, 1998; Westbury, Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000). According to Hudson and Meyer (2011) the German-speaking discussions on *Didaktik* are internationally present (only) in countries with respective traditions, but not in regions in which the term is either not (much)

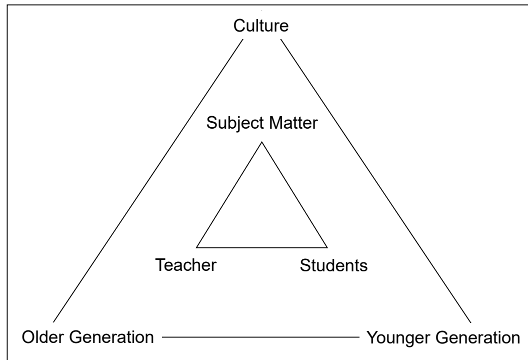
known, or has a rather pejorative meaning only; the latter holds true for both the Anglophone and Francophone worlds.

Only few in German-speaking academia who discuss *Bildung* and *Didaktik* as part of a sub-discipline traditionally called *Schulpädagogik* (summarized here as *classroom teaching and research*), do research from *international comparative perspectives* and/or consider how to react to or respond in classroom teaching and research to the *challenges of globalization*. Publications report of discussions between German and French curriculum research including perspectives from Francophone African countries (Schelle, 2013; Schelle, Straub, Hübler, Montandon & Mbaye, 2020). Others address the discourse on didactics and school teaching in various European traditions (Hudson & Meyer, 2011). Yet others reflect on how concepts of general education are responding to globalization (Meyer, 2018; Meyer, Scheunpflug & Hellekamps, 2018). Such publications have their main background in theories of *Bildung* and *Didaktik* with only marginal reflections on comparative methodology and theories of international relations. In *Comparative and International Education*, however, curriculum research and classroom teaching are less often touched upon compared to the slew of research on international and national policies of education, comparisons of the structure and reforms of national education systems, and international comparative assessments like PISA and others. There are researchers who combine these two spheres – classroom teaching and research, and comparative and international education – but all in all this twofold field of research has been and continues to make scarce appearances. *The vignettes in this special issue are thus timely contributions to addressing an underrepresented area of interdisciplinary research between two sub-disciplines of education.*

The didactics triangle in its (global) societal context

Against the backdrop of this short glimpse into different traditions of classroom teaching and research, the term 'didactics' will be used in the following by referring to the entire set of (self-)reflections and planning concerned with what is one of the basics of teacher training: reflections on the so-called *didaktische Dreieck* (didactics triangle). This is made up of 'subject matter,' 'students,' and 'teacher,' a relatedness which Peter Menck has put into its broader context of societal legitimization in his book on classroom research and 'didactics' (2000), and constitutes the *raison d'être* of all school teaching (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The didactics triangle in its context (source: Menck, 2000, p. 25)



According to Menck (2000, p. 14 and passim) 'didactics' (explicitly with an 's') defines reflecting and theorizing about contents and intentions of instruction in school, or, in his words: "classroom work," which he sees as a means of passing on human culture from one generation to the next, with "culture" defined as "humanity's achievements in broadening its natural state of being so as to make possible a humane life in the world." I would like to stress the notion of 'humanity's achievements' and 'a humane life in the world' here, because this perspective abstains from focusing on any particular human culture while at the same time highlighting the oftentimes overlooked factual focus on 'achievements' in school teaching. After all, who would volunteer to teach children the atrocities of humankind? If such are topics in school – as in the vignette on how the Holocaust and apartheid are taught in a history class in an ex-Whites-only high school in South Africa (Robinson), then this can only be pedagogically legitimated if treated as a negative example of human behavior to be discredited and overcome (for which, however, there is no guarantee, as the observations in Robinson's vignette show). Coming back to Menck's view:

> it is the task of the 'school' to pass on a particular 'cultural minimum', which will endow the young members of the particular culture with the achievements of humanity, thus turning them into full members of society. When this point has been reached, they have all the rights of an adult human being, they accept all the duties of an adult human being, and they have the abilities and the knowledge to allow them to make responsible use of their rights and to perform their duties. (ibid.)

Relating this point of view to globalization and the resulting challenges of global citizenship and global education, schooling today is not only preparing the young generation of (and for) a particular culture and society, but at the same time is also addressing them as future citizens of a complex and interrelated world, which,

at best, is on the way to translating 'humanity's achievements' into 'sustainable development.' In this sense, *Bildung* means the (self-)appropriation of culture by the individual and is seen as the ultimate overall objective of teaching in school, because – unlike teaching as indoctrination or copying – the transmission of human culture from the adult to the younger generation ultimately depends on the 'emancipation' of the young while they become fully active adults capable of competent reasoning and action transcending existing human knowledge and practice.

Summing up, didactics responds to the basic question: How might we conduct a pedagogically sound selection from the potentially unlimited and factually undetermined universe of human knowledge (i.e. 'culture' in Figure 1) of what should then be the object (i.e. the 'subject matter' of classroom work) of the interaction between the teacher (as a representative of the 'older generation') and the students (in their capacity as the 'younger generation') in their classroom work at school? The didactics triangle visualizes the basic relatedness and interdependence between what is (to be) taught (the subject matter) and the interacting teacher and student(s). One cannot do without the other; in other words, it would not be instruction for *Bildung* in a school. Syllabus, curriculum and textbooks prescribe 'the matter' to be taught and learned, but neither the teacher nor the students are passive and purely reproducing prefabricated knowledge. Instead, they are co-constructing 'the matter' in the course of teaching and learning which may lead to very divergent actualizations of intended curricula and programs. In my view this can be seen in the different versions of GCE described and interpreted in the vignettes. In short: It would be worrying if the vignettes were too similar, since a nearly perfect match between prescription (program, policy), intended curriculum and classroom realization would indeed alert suspicion of 'indoctrination.'

The pedagogy of Paulo Freire referred to in the vignette on university course planning in the USA (Kertyzia) explicitly highlights this *co-constructive role of teacher and students vis-à-vis what is (to be) taught* since it belongs to the core of Freire's critical thinking on school education with the ultimate aim of education for liberation. Teaching in school exceeds the mere repetition of established knowledge by learners in the manner of parrots reproducing their masters' words – if it were so, it would not be *Bildung* or, in Freire's words, *education for liberation* (cf. Adick, 2019). Emic classroom research such as that displayed in the vignettes may thus unveil the co-constructive nature of GCE by both teacher and learner(s) in class, in short: the enactment of GCE. The vignette depicting instruction in a South African high school (Robinson) includes vivid observations on this co-constructive role of learners. A student asks the simple question: "Sir, if D.F. Malan was the architect of apartheid, then why is there a school in Cape Town still named after him?" The observant scholar notes that this overthrows the whole teaching concept because it

revealed a ‘racial divide’ – the “elephant in the (class-)room” – which the teacher “was ill-equipped to manage” in his history class. In this moment, GCE postulates were questioned and confronted with the existing social reality, and it seems the lesson planning did not anticipate such contradictions or how to handle them in class. This can be seen as a strategic example of the more general challenge for teachers regarding how to ‘resolve’ a situation in which the classroom discussion transcends the didactical planning as well as the apparent limits of teaching and learning in school. It is the classroom interaction itself that unveils these limitations, since there is no direct path from the classroom to social reality. As such, the vignettes might themselves be utilized in teacher training courses to help guard future teachers against false expectations of ‘saving the world’ with their GCE teaching. It might at times be frustrating, but classroom work operates outside ‘real life.’ It is set apart in time and space by literally ‘going to school.’

All in all, the difference between prescription (program) and realization (in the classroom) is not a regrettable malfunction. It is neither a deficiency of the program nor of classroom work, nor is it a sign of de-coupling between the two due to lack of information or communication, for example. Instead, it is seen here as an indicator of the ‘relative pedagogical autonomy’ of the school, which according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1974) is essential for its functioning. Without a certain autonomy the school in modern societies could not fulfil its role of preparing competent future citizens; citizens who only reiterate existing knowledge would neither be productive, nor (self-)critical, nor innovative. But this autonomy is relative, depending not least on the societal conditions in which teachers act and classroom work is practiced, such as the degree of freedom of speech allowed, the role of authority and discipline, or concepts of childhood and adulthood. As part of the overall international development (‘globalization’), the school not only reflects global influences but is actively concerned with the attempt to master or deal with them in a productive way. Human knowledge of the world is selected and transformed into a subject matter in school in order to be actively appropriated by pupils and students. This acquisition of knowledge in the school includes critique, contradiction and new possibilities to interpret the world. Thus, the process of education may eventually lead to a transformation of human knowledge and to a re-interpretation of the world’s situation into new possibilities for humankind to survive, evoking responsibility and insight into the complex economic, social and cultural world situation.

Knowledge and societal challenges (the ‘culture’ aspect) are transformed into ‘objectives of the school’ delegated to be tackled and solved by the national education system (‘educationalization’). The education system, then, deals with these external challenges in a specifically pedagogical manner due to its relative autonomy, and this is exactly its specific contribution, which other sub-systems of society like

the economy or politics do not achieve (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1974). This means that a national education system does not simply conform to external pressures (such as globalization), but instead, by using specific pedagogical means (like curricula, textbooks, teacher training), transforms them so that they make sense in an educational way.

Global Citizenship Education: Top-down or bottom-up?

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) has a long history, if conceived of as a specific and timely accentuation of the more general area of 'global education,' which I understand to be an umbrella term embracing specifications such as peace education, human rights education, and education for sustainable development. As early as 1974, UNESCO issued a "recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms," essentially defining its guiding principle as "an international and a global perspective in education at all levels and in all its forms" (UNESCO, 1974, p. 4). Even though there were claims to revise these recommendations twenty years later, UNESCO decided to adhere to the original document because it symbolized a global consensus and was still pertinent. In later years UNESCO issued and monitored the decades of human rights education, then education for sustainable development, and other programs of international education including global citizenship education.

Policy analyses tend to consider the implementation of such programs as a 'top-down-process,' taking the UNESCO programs, for instance, as representing 'the top' from which ideas and concepts are handed down to 'the bottom' which is the teaching as it is practiced in class, and even considers the individual learner and their *Bildung*. At first glance, it might be taken for granted that we need curriculum planning, etc., in order to achieve GCE. But, firstly, this dimension is seldom touched upon when GCE is discussed as a worldwide pedagogical program and how its aims and objectives may be explained, defended, and legitimized. And, secondly, how curriculum planning of GCE is actually practiced is an under-researched area that lacks empirical differentiation. This is why, now, a multi-level approach to analyzing didactical discourse is sketched. In reality, there are a lot of intermediary stages between the (global) top and the (particular) bottom, with various types of actors who interpret, select, extract, enlarge, reduce, adapt, and even alter the program which is received from the top (see Table 1, adapted from Adick, 2002, pp. 245–248). The idea behind this is to clarify that didactics concern not only individual lesson planning and classroom instruction but form an integral part of all decisions concerning the framing and outlook of what is taught and learned at school. The levels of decision-making

are interlinked, but not in a deterministic top-down-process. The actors on each level have some degree of freedom (relative autonomy) and different resources via which they act according to their specific logic. This is the main reason for ‘de-coupling’ effects.

Table 1: Programs of global education between ‘top’ and ‘bottom’

Level of decision-making	*Areas of didactical discourse*
1. International blueprints of global education	Programs of international organizations, esp. UNESCO, international NGOs or international teachers’ associations
2. Global education as part of the national education system	Ways to include the program into the school system, e.g. concerning school level, grades, syllabus, national curricula and testing schemes
3. Global education in the individual school	Type of school, its school program and philosophy, area and social context of the school, and parents’ influence
4. Global Education in one or more of the school subjects	Subject matter didactics, curriculum and textbook development for specific school subjects, at times also for specific types and levels of school
5. Didactical analysis of topics of global education	Lesson planning and preparation of classroom activities by the individual teacher for a specific course
6. Instructional Practice of global education	Classroom work along the specific teaching situation

As highlighted (in Table 1) there is no direct line from ‘top’ to ‘bottom.’ Rather, an educational program at the ultimate international top, such as GCE as prescribed by UNESCO and other international agencies, goes through several steps before it arrives at the very bottom – a certain classroom with individual teachers and learners in a particular and singular lesson in which the class is said to be working on a topic allegedly pertaining to GCE. As mentioned above, it is posited here that the vignettes give lively impressions and insights into the workings of the ‘relative pedagogical autonomy’ of the school, including the teacher and the co-constructive role of the students. Policy analysis cannot uncover the insights gained by such snapshots of the practice of classroom work. From this stems the suggestion that the vignettes might contain traces of (presumed) didactical discourses on levels beyond the pure description of what is happening in a certain situation (bearing in mind, of course, that any ‘pure’ descriptions are epistemologically impossible, even if one tries to be an ‘objective’ observer). If the idea behind writing vignettes on GCE was to enable a ‘bottom-up’ perspective, as proclaimed, then it would be advisable to look for evidence as to whether and how the authors utilize perspectives from ideas, arguments or concepts that are above (‘on top’) of the perceived classroom. In this sense, their authors would be ‘*writing from a ‘bottom-up’ perspective.*’

It comes as no surprise that most of the vignettes contain didactical reasoning on the practice of GCE at classroom level (level 6), since authors were asked to write 'bottom-up.' But what does that actually mean? The texts are a mix of descriptions, interpretations, comparisons, conclusions, comments, extrapolations and self-reflections. Literally conferred to describing the actual example at stake, they do contain messages *from 'the bottom,'* but do not (necessarily) touch a *'bottom-up' perspective*. Writing from a 'bottom-up' perspective becomes visible if arguments are connected to the 'upwards ladder' of discourse, e.g. relating an event in class (level 6) to the lesson planning before (level 5) or reflecting on its position in the subject to be taught (level 4), or confronting it to the complexities of the particular school (level 3), or furthermore reasoning whether the observed instruction meets the nationally prescribed curriculum, e.g. of a new subject (level 2) or what the observer holds true as the global consensus on the objectives of GCE (level 1). The route of reflection thus goes from 'bottom' to 'top.' The idea behind suggesting such a 'structured ladder of didactic reconstruction' (how did the perceived instruction – allegedly – come about?) would be twofold: *constructive* in the sense of enabling a more complex teacher training for GCE, and *analytic* in the sense of helping structure future research on the implementation processes of GCE. With both of these aspects in mind, then, I will look for signs of what I now refer to as *'upward reasoning' in the vignettes.*

Upward reasoning from 'bottom' to 'top' in the vignettes

While re-reading the vignettes with glasses looking for 'upward reasoning' I was astonished to find numerous examples, with many indications that the authors are incorporating thoughts far beyond classroom work considerations into their texts. I will touch upon some examples, knowing that with a closer look, or if one could even interview the authors about how they came to their decisions to write these vignettes, my impressions cannot capture all of the associations with and references to the many items visualized in the overview (Table 1).

Vignette 1 (Natasha Robinson): Here, the author relates the description of the classroom work of Mr. Cilliers to the objective of the subject (which is 9th grade history) he has to teach (level 4). The author also embeds the story within the history of this formerly 'whites only' prestigious high school (with still low numbers of non-white children attending) in which the observed teaching takes place (level 3). Furthermore, the author (Robinson) contends that Mr. Cilliers' topics give the impression that he interprets history teaching very much in "what we have often thought of as good Global Citizenship Education: a strong focus on human rights, democracy, and treating each other as equals." Who is the author's (Robinson's) 'we' in this

reflection; are ‘we’ echoing the blueprint (global consensus) of GCE (level 1)? The text also connects the description of Mr. Cilliers’ teaching to the South African school system with its apartheid legacy (level 2), which, it is said, remained “the elephant in the (class-)room” in the lessons observed.

Vignette 2 (Annett Gräfe-Geusch): In this text the author intentionally confronts two apparently different realizations of the same subject, ‘ethics’ (level 4) in two different types of classes. The first is for the ‘ordinary’ school population; the other is a ‘welcome class’ designed for newly migrated children. This addresses an issue concerning the national education system (level 2) as well as the individual school (level 3). The author (Gräfe-Geusch) posits that “both teachers saw ethics as a way to engage with diversity and to prepare their students for life in an interconnected world. Both of these accounts provide insights into challenges and chances that (forced) migration provided to schools in Germany,” also adding a footnote on literature which discusses “the connection between diversity, immigration, multicultural education and GCE.” In my opinion this argument includes ‘upward reasoning’ to levels 1 and 2. Interviews with the teachers discuss ‘critical topics’ in ethics teaching, such as whether religion was (to be) part of that subject (level 4) which affected the lesson planning (level 5) of the non-religious teacher from the former GDR (German Democratic Republic) which disfavored religious practices. Students of the welcome class – attended by students from various different countries – are said to have behaved “in some cases incredibly nationalistic” – unexpectedly, as it seems, for this type of school teaching directed at newly arrived migrants (level 3).

Vignette 3 (Jennifer Riggan): In this case the author reflects on a curriculum unit on ‘savings’ which is part of a newly established national subject in Ethiopia (levels 4 and 2) called ‘Civic & Ethical Education’ (CEE). She posits: “In many respects the CEE curriculum is a blueprint for a particular notion of citizenship and personhood. CEE is a required and mandatory subject from elementary school through university.” The outlook of CEE is identified with “neoliberal developmentalism” stemming from (global? ‘western’-type?) concepts of human rights, constitutional democracy and “aggressive developmentalism” (level 1). This, however, according to teachers interviewed and classroom observations (level 6), contradicts the social reality in Ethiopia. How? The unit on saving tends to delegitimize traditional ways of savings (*ikub* and *idir*) and vilifies cultural obstacles to saving money (e.g. ‘excessive’ festivities) by instead proclaiming or even prescribing (indoctrinating?) modern institutions like saving money in a bank, a severe challenge for didactical analysis (level 5).

Vignette 4 (Meg P. Gardinier): This text requires a slightly different perspective for my analysis, containing as it does references to various levels of discourse. It describes and reflects on student protests in Albania by suggesting “the idea of *global*

civic engagement does what global citizenship and global competence have yet failed to do – it unites individuals across distinctly different points of view into a sense of belonging, purpose, and agentic action for social and political change." The author believes that this "can offer important insights for a range of stakeholders committed to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other areas of collective social and political transformation." The text concludes: "Paradoxically (as this vignette argues), it may be in taking action – and walking *out* of school in order to do so – that young people are best able to enact a powerful form of civic learning by asserting their new visions for system transformation within the public sphere." This resonates with what I have written above, that a lot of or even most (?) GCE might take place – unbeknown to us researchers – outside school learning.

Vignette 5 (Heather Kertyzia): As a professor of Peace Education who considers GCE highly connected to peace education (possibly level 1), the author compares how her courses are (have to be?) implemented in two higher education institutions with a very different intake of students: one with a more diverse population from neighborhoods with mostly Latin American or African-American backgrounds; the other an international university with a highly international studentship (level 3). As she applied Freire's dialogical pedagogy she engaged the students in her course planning (level 4, 5 and 6). This, however, made her reflect again not only on her own role (levels 5 and 6) but also challenge her notion of the overall educational mission of GCE (level 1) and GCE in teacher training (level 2). The vignette displays a lot of co-construction of the respective students' groups and at the same time a broad self-reflection on a teacher's constructive? re-constructive? responsive? role in GCE taking place 'at the bottom.'

Vignette 6 (Lance Levenson): This text may be considered as tackling the most – permit me to use these labels – multiple, multicultural, international, multilingual, and interreligious classroom situation of all the vignettes. An ideal context for GCE, one might ponder. But is this so? Does a seemingly GCE-friendly school context (level 3) guarantee the formation of a good global citizen? The author questions this. He takes a religious song in the classroom he observes as the turning point of the analysis; it is a song in "Swahili lyrics, based on a traditional English Christian hymn, to the voices of Palestinian students taught by a Jewish-American teacher in a Church of Scotland school in Israel." By considering the uniqueness of this school in the landscape of education in Israel (level 2) a very specific type of cosmopolitan identity (level 1) comes to the surface. At a meeting of alumni from all over the world, a strong identification of this school's graduates with 'their' school is detected, a school which obviously helped to accumulate international cultural capital in really 'globally mixed' school philosophies and classroom situations.

Summary

In my comment I have chosen to see the vignettes through the lens of some basic traditions of German-language reasoning on 'classroom teaching and research,' including how these resonate with international, predominantly Anglophone, discourse. The vignettes open up this perspective in a number of ways: (i) They focus on an underrepresented area of interdisciplinary research, since on the one hand most classroom research remains restricted to a specific national education system, whereby, on the other, comparative education research seldom reaches the classroom level. (ii) Several of the vignettes open up views on the actual working of the 'relative pedagogical autonomy' to explain a good deal of the ubiquitous mismatch between policies/programs and educational reality. (iii) Some of the observations in the texts can be read as unveiling the co-constructive work of teachers as well as their students in actual classroom work, a factor which is not taken into account in most (programmatic) discussions around GCE.

Note

1. *Bildung*: Another key German concept for which there is no equivalent in English because it means something more than its straightforward English translation, 'education,' which can in turn also be translated into German as '*Erziehung.*' If '*Erziehung*' were then (re-)translated into English it might possibly end up as 'education', but would actually resonate more with something like 'upbringing' (cf. Adick, 2008, pp. 48–52).

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