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***Critical Global Learning: Lessons from a Self-study Action
Research Project within Initial Teacher Education in Ireland.***

Brigid Golden

B.Ed., M.Ed.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of PhD in Education

School of Social Sciences, College of Education

University of Glasgow

Abstract

This thesis follows my journey as a teacher educator as I engaged in a self-study action research project to explore how my practice impacted on students' critical global learning, which I define as the intersection between critical thinking and global education (GE). I sought to discover the strengths and areas for improvement within my practice and to come to an enhanced understanding of my students' interaction with my teaching. By locating this study within the nexus of critical thinking and GE within the context of initial teacher education (ITE), I responded to the knowledge-gap in relation to the teaching of critical global learning within ITE. In responding to this gap, I developed a conceptual framework, comprised of a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, and a *Planning Tool* strategically designed to implement the model.

I adopted a self-study action research approach which took place across three cycles of data collection over three academic years. I worked with my students in their second year of their Bachelor of Education degrees. Data collection involved multiple methods, including focus group interviews, surveys, collection of evidence from in-class work, personal reflections, and engagement with critical friends. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2020a) was employed to analyse the data.

Data collection and analysis were underpinned by my *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, developed through an ongoing literature review. Additionally, the findings from cycles one and two led to the creation of a *Planning Tool*, implemented in cycle three, which supported the model's implementation. Findings led to a discussion on the tensions, which reflected where there was a conflict between competing considerations within my practice. The identified tensions were sub-divided into pedagogical tensions, student-specific tensions, and tensions presented by external influences. The outcomes from my research are the result of my navigation of these tensions.

This study is significant as it makes a unique contribution to knowledge through the presentation of a conceptual framework that offers a new and unique conceptualisation of the intersections between critical thinking and GE as they apply to ITE. The conceptual framework provides a roadmap to approach the teaching of critical global learning in ITE grounded in evidence from this research project.

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List of abbreviations

B.Ed Bachelor of Education

CoE Council of Europe

CPD Continuing Professional Development

CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child

DE Development Education

DoE Department of Education

DfE Department for Education

DfID Department for International Development

DICE Development and Intercultural Education

EfS Education for Sustainability

ESD Education for Sustainable Development

GCE Global Citizenship Education

GE Global Education

GENE Global Education Network Europe

GLP Global Learning Programme

HRE Human Rights Education

ICE Intercultural Education

IHREC Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

ITE Initial Teacher Education

LCP Leaving Certificate Programme

MSCSs Most Significant Change Stories

NCCA National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

PAR Participatory Action Research

SoTL Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

TOE Through Other Eyes

UN United Nations

UNDHRET United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Brigid Golden

Signature: 

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis follows my journey as a teacher educator as I engaged in a self-study action research project to explore how my practice impacted on students' critical global learning. Drawing on literature, professional discussions, and empirical research, I present the outcomes from my learning. Throughout this study, I endeavoured to come to a better understanding of myself as a teacher educator, of my students and their interaction with my practice, and of the interconnected fields of global education (GE) and critical thinking, and their place within initial teacher education (ITE).

In this chapter I outline the origins and purpose of my research and identify and detail the relevant contextual backdrop for the project, including an outline of policies relevant to this educational space. Additionally, this chapter offers a brief overview of ITE and the field of GE within the Irish context. The final contextual section of this chapter details my personal journey to becoming a teacher educator. This is offered in the context of the self-study action research being undertaken. With the knowledge that “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998, p.1), I acknowledge that the moments and experiences that shaped me as a teacher educator impact on my teaching, and so I offer them as relevant contextual information. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a summary of the chapters within this thesis.

1.2 Purpose and Background of this Research Project

As a teacher educator driven by a curiosity to know more about my practice and chosen field and an ethical imperative to provide the highest quality teaching I am capable of, I am motivated to reflect on and improve my practice. On beginning my journey to PhD, I was determined to combine my roles as a researcher and as a teacher educator and in their intertwining to understand how they could influence and improve each other. Having worked as a teacher educator prior to beginning this thesis, I wanted to use this opportunity to observe, enquire into, and improve my practices.

I chose to locate this research within a core module of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme within the institution where I had worked as a teacher educator for two and a half years prior to starting this journey. The students involved were studying to become primary school teachers and I worked with them during the second year of their four-year programme as part of a mandatory social studies module which included, in equal parts, pedagogy of primary history, pedagogy of primary geography, and GE which I delivered.

Over time, I had observed a repeated inconsistency between students' professed levels of criticality and those they demonstrated during classes or in assessments. As I was passionate about supporting students to develop their critical thinking through a focus on GE, I was motivated to research this discrepancy and explore avenues to address it. At the heart of this research problem lies each students' awareness of their own criticality, their understanding of critical thinking and the academic expectations within higher education.

Through this research I gained an increased awareness and understanding of my teaching practices and the wider fields of ITE, critical thinking, GE and their intersections.

Undertaking this research project enabled me to identify strengths and areas for improvement within my practice, and develop strategies to address these. While my students and I remain the primary beneficiaries of this research, in that the experience and findings will continue to inform and improve my teaching practices into the future, this research also contributes to the wider research field. The strategies and approaches I developed through engaging in this research contribute to a growing body of literature exploring how to approach the teaching of critical global learning within ITE. Through sharing my research journey, I aim to hold up a mirror for other teacher educators to consider where their experiences align or diverge from my story. The teaching approaches and models developed as part of this research are designed to be adaptable and aim to support other teacher educators to consider their approaches to critical global learning within their settings.

1.2.1 Research Focus

This study took place within the nexus between the fields of critical thinking, GE and the context of ITE in Ireland. While there are significant overlaps between critical thinking and GE which this thesis will outline, I found a gap in research that connects this intersection

with implications for ITE. For the purposes of this study, I adopt the term critical global learning to capture the interconnections between these fields and offer the following definition:

Critical global learning is a reflective educational process founded on the values of global justice, equity and human rights. It focuses on engaging in understanding and questioning the dominant systems and structures which create and perpetuate multiple forms of inequality globally. It encourages us to consider how our lives interact with the questions being explored and fosters an interest in acting to address inequality. It is a learning process which recognises different ways of understanding the world and consequently draws on multiple perspectives to inform the learning process.

Within this study I drew on critical conceptualisations of GE, combined with an awareness of the limitations of both critical thinking and GE to inform the development of a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and a *Planning Tool* to support its implementation. The combination of the model and the tool contribute a new framework to further our understanding of the intersections of these fields.

As outlined above, I was motivated to learn about and grow my awareness of my practice as a teacher educator to support my students in progressing their critical global learning. In this thesis, I have focused both on generating theory about the relevant skills and dispositions pertinent to critical global learning and exploring how best to support students to develop their criticality in line with that theoretical understanding. I was interested in developing my understanding of both the demonstrable skills of critical global learning and the less observable dispositions which underpin the implementation of those skills. Dispositions include the values, attitudes, convictions and commitments that students personally hold and which together reflect who they are as human beings and indicate who they may be as future classroom teachers. It was crucial to focus both on observable and measurable skills alongside the less visible dispositions as they impact on the way in which students may interpret information or implement or use their skills in their daily lives.

I undertook a self-study action research project across three cycles over three academic years, which enabled me to frame and review my practice and knowledge about teaching critical global learning within my unique context. The research took place within the higher education institution where I have worked since 2014. It is a College of Education and the Liberal Arts with a strong focus on teacher education from early years through primary, post-primary, and adult education. While it is academically linked with a University, the institution itself is not large, which allows for significant collegiate collaboration and an intimate atmosphere on campus.

1.2.2 The Research Question and Aims

The core research question which this study addresses is:

What can be learned from a self-study action research project to contribute to the understanding and application of critical global learning for teacher educators?

This question is underpinned by the following aims:

- *To ascertain the factors which contribute to student motivation, participation and achievement within critical global learning.*
- *To identify the opportunities and barriers which impact on the implementation of critical global learning within the institutional and national contexts that I work.*

This research question is underpinned by my prior experiences as a teacher educator and a desire to come to know my practice better. At the heart of this research question is a commitment to be the best educator that I can be for my students. In acknowledging that there are always opportunities for improvement in my practice, I entered into this research with an openness to change.

1.3 Context of the Research

As will be outlined further in Chapter Two, GE is an umbrella term which encompasses related fields of education including development education (DE), human rights education (HRE), education for sustainable development (ESD) or education for sustainability (EfS),

education for peace and conflict prevention, intercultural education (ICE), and global citizenship education (GCE) (Wegimont, 2020). Throughout this thesis many of these terms are often used interchangeably with GE to reflect the different terms favoured by different authors. This research project took place within the context of the Irish education system where GCE, DE, ICE, and ESD are all used in policies and practice contexts. There are a number of key policy documents, outlined in Figure 1, which provide a sense of the educational backdrop to this study.



Figure 1: Timeline of Relevant Irish Educational Policies

The 1998 Education Act was the first comprehensive piece of legislation regarding schooling since the foundation of the Irish Republic in 1922. The Act establishes the core principles of education and sets out expectations for planning and accountability, stating that the education system should be “accountable to students, their parents and the State for the education provided”, should respect “the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society”, and should engage in a “partnership between schools, patrons, students, parents, teachers and other school staff, the community served by the school and the State” (Department of Education, 1998, Part 1 Section 1). The partnership and community approach to education remains a cornerstone of the education system and can be seen reflected in the management of schools in particular (Doyle et al., 2020).

In more recent years, there have been a number of policies which detail the expected provision in areas linked to GE. *The Guidelines for Intercultural Education*, published in 2006 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) aim to contribute to

the development of Ireland as an intercultural society based on a shared belief that language, culture and ethnic diversity are valuable contributors to the formation of an equal society. These guidelines were followed by an *Intercultural Education Strategy* in 2010 which aims to ensure that all learners experience an education which respects and reflects the diversity of Irish society. While the aims of these policies are ambitious, they were not accompanied by implementation plans or comprehensive training for educators.

In 2014 the Department of Education (DoE) published their *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development* which “aims to ensure that education contributes to sustainable development by equipping learners with the relevant knowledge (the ‘what’), the key dispositions and skills (the ‘how’) and the values (the ‘why’) that will motivate and empower them throughout their lives to become informed active citizens who take action for a more sustainable future” (DoE, 2014, p.3). Similar to the ICE policies, this strategy was not accompanied by an implementation plan and resultingly, its impact has depended on the interests of individual educators.

The most recent *Global Citizenship Education Strategy*, published by Irish Aid (2021) (a branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs) builds on previous DE strategies by interlinking with the Departments’ approaches to overseas aid and development work. The goal of Irish Aid’s strategy is “that people in Ireland have access to quality, lifelong Global Citizenship Education, enabling them to become active global citizens committed to a fairer and more sustainable future for all” (Irish Aid, 2021, p.13). The strategy is largely implemented by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations who are funded by Irish Aid and who deliver DE in both formal and informal settings across the country. The aims of the strategy are further realised through the Development and Intercultural Education (DICE) Project which is a national project aiming to embed DE and ICE into mainstream primary level ITE programmes across Ireland. The DICE Project has been recognised as a model of good practice for mainstreaming GE in ITE (Waldron, 2014; Global Education Network Europe, 2015). I have been one of the ‘DICE lecturers’ since the beginning of my career in higher education in 2014.

Two recent documents mark incoming changes to the education system in Ireland. These have a direct impact on the context of this study. *The National Curriculum for Primary Schools* which was published in 1999 is currently under review. While curriculum

documents which detail learning objectives have not yet been published, the draft framework published in 2020 outlines significant changes in relation to the organisation of the timetable along with indicative changes to curricular areas and identifies a set of new key competencies. Of particular note to this study is that one of the key competencies outlined is ‘being an active citizen’. The purpose of this competency within the curriculum is to “help children question, critique and understand what is happening in the world within a framework of human rights, equality and social justice” (NCCA, 2020, p.8). This provides a formal space for GE work to take place in primary schools for the first time.

Secondly, the standards for ITE in Ireland have been revised, the new guidelines are entitled *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*. All ITE programmes will be required to meet these standards by 1st January 2023 to retain their accreditation. The document outlines required areas of study and key principals which all ITE programmes must include. One of the core elements the standards include is GCE (The Teaching Council, 2020). This is the first time there has been a requirement for ITE to include any form of GE within their programmes.

Curriculum documents and the standards for ITE are critical documents that dictate educational practice. The inclusion of citizenship within these two documents marks a change from previous documents which named a commitment to equality and justice, but rarely has this been evident in implementation plans. Rather it has been more visible in ideals, aims or mission statements than in documents relating to practice (Tittley, 2009).

Furthermore, Irish policy sits within and is influenced by the direction of international policies. The timeline in Figure 2 includes five of the most significant policies which have impacted on the direction of GE within Ireland.

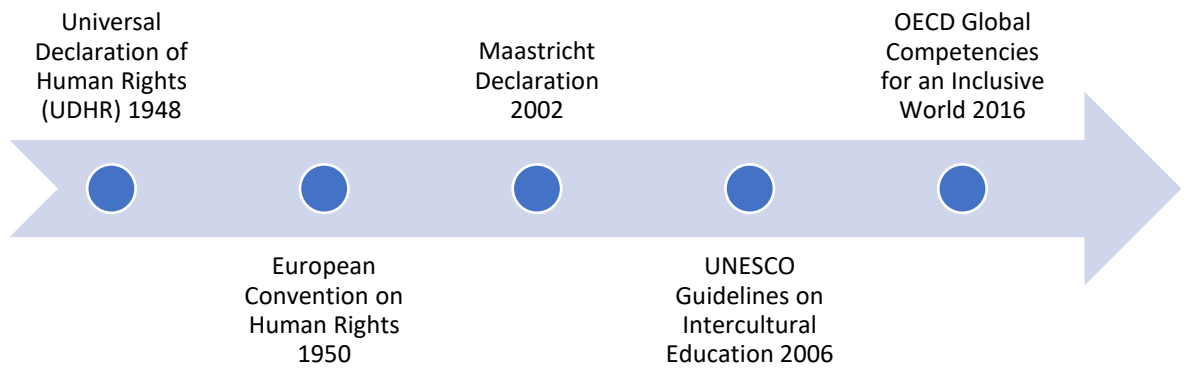


Figure 2: Timeline of Relevant International Policies

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* and the *European Convention on Human Rights* informed the values which underpinned subsequent policies. The Maastricht declaration reflects a political consensus amongst government bodies, civil society groups, and academics in Europe in relation to defining GE as an umbrella term which encompasses the varied related educational approaches throughout European countries (Wegimont, 2020). The Maastricht declaration led to the development of numerous GE initiatives and policies across Europe. Furthermore, the definition offered within the declaration has been adopted by the Global Education Network Europe (GENE), the European network of Ministries and Agencies with national responsibility for policymaking, funding and support in the field of GE (GENE, 2020a). More recently, the global competencies assessment developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) represents an international move towards including and measuring GE skills in education. The PISA global competencies assessment was introduced in 2018 and measures learners’ capacity to explore “local, global and intercultural issues, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development” (OECD, 2018, p.7). Additional contextual considerations which combine to inform the backdrop against which this research study took place include ITE, GE, and my autobiographical story.

1.3.1 Initial Teacher Education

Pride in our education system has long formed a cornerstone of national identity in the Republic of Ireland. Central to that pride is the widely acknowledged high calibre of Irish trained teachers (Coolahan, 2003). Testament to this international recognition, our teaching graduates continue to find themselves accepting jobs in countries all over the world with relative ease.

Two changes are happening concurrently in many countries across the Western world today; pupil populations in schools are becoming more diverse in terms of racial, cultural and socioeconomic make-up while at the same time the classroom teacher population is becoming more homogenous, primarily white and middle-class (Mills, 2013). Hyland (2012, p.10) argues that “the teaching profession in Ireland, especially at primary school level, is less culturally and ethnically diverse than in other OECD countries”. Hyland (2012) points to both the Catholic-based tradition of education in Ireland and especially Irish-language requirements as potential reasons (see also O’Donoghue and Harford, 2011). This poses a significant challenge for teacher education to prepare student teachers to be effective classroom teachers in diverse classrooms while having little knowledge or experience of persons from other ethnicities or social classes. Therefore, it is essential that teacher education acknowledges the backgrounds of its students and incorporates this understanding in planning for the methodologies and topics to be covered (Cook-Sather and Youens, 2007; Waldron et al., 2012; Mills, 2013). Awareness of the profile of my students has been of central importance to this study. McLaren (2009) posits that critical educational theorists view knowledge as historically and socially bound, and advocates for educators to develop an awareness of their learners’ backgrounds and the societal influences at play for them. Due to the largely homogenous nature of the student cohort, they were not able to draw on a wealth of experience or knowledge in relation to experiences of people beyond their cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Awareness of this has influenced my planning and been a reflective consideration for me in evaluating the impact of my practice with the knowledge of my students’ starting points.

1.3.2 Global Education in Ireland

Ireland has a lengthy and robust history of GE engagement in both the formal and non-formal education sectors. Ireland is recognised at EU and International levels as a leader in this sector as a result of the strength of the support structures and the quality of programmes and organisations implementing GE in Ireland (Fiedler et al., 2011; OECD, 2014; Global Education Network Europe, 2015; Murphy et al., 2017; O’Flaherty and Liddy, 2018). As outlined earlier in this chapter, GE is an umbrella term with many constituent approaches emphasised to different degrees in different contexts. In Ireland, DE has historically been the favoured approach within civil society and the Department of Foreign Affairs, with GCE beginning to be used more frequently. Irish DE has its roots in missionary work and was strongly influenced by non-governmental development organisations such as Concern Worldwide and Trócaire¹ (Dillon, 2018). In 1978 the Irish government first introduced a dedicated budget line for funding DE initiatives in response to advocacy for DE to be established as a core element of development cooperation (Dillon, 2018). This budget was funded through Irish Aid within the Department of Foreign Affairs, which continued to provide funding for the DE sector in Ireland and shape Ireland’s policy and practice landscape by developing and monitoring strategies informed by consultations and research. Irish Aid DE strategies have been praised as “innovative and effective” (GENE, 2015).

Drawing on the work of Fiedler et al. (2011), Dillon (2018) highlights three discursive strands associated with the evolution of DE work in Ireland. The first strand is values-based DE which was influenced by the work of Paulo Freire (1970) and focuses on global justice and equality and emphasises a structural analysis of global North-South inequalities. This approach was heavily influenced by Trócaire, who had a significant impact on shaping the understanding of DE in the Irish context. The second discursive

¹ Trócaire are an Irish organisation founded by the bishops of Ireland focused on overseas development work and development education.

strand relates to ‘solidarity’. This has been especially embraced by Comhlámh² and their member groups. This strand of DE is focused on enabling returned development workers and volunteers to share their overseas experiences to further support for development work. ‘Development-as-charity’ is the third discursive strand. This strand has its roots in missionary work in Africa and Asia and is focused on promoting awareness for the purposes of fundraising in schools. In her arguments, Dillon (2018) presents evidence highlighting the contradictory nature of the approaches to, and conceptualisations of, DE in Ireland. While acknowledging that DE has become more formalised, she (ibid) traces the conflicting approaches back to the origins and evolution of DE and the three distinct strands identified by Fiedler et al.(2011). Dillon (2018, p.20), through her research, found that each of the three approaches are still evident in DE practice in Ireland today “with some promoting value-based education for justice, others emphasising awareness raising and solidarity, some promoting awareness raising to support development efforts and others focused on individual action and volunteering”. Although contradictory, the three approaches to practice highlight the variety of engagement that epitomises the approach to GE in Ireland. This diversity of engagement and approaches has been highlighted as one of the core strengths of GE in Ireland (Murphy et al., 2017).

Additionally, the recognition of GE as integral to ITE in Ireland is evident in the long and continued histories of the DICE Project at primary level, and the Ubuntu Network at post-primary level. Both initiatives are funded by Irish Aid and support the integration of GE into ITE in Ireland, supporting both staff and students within ITE institutions to develop their understanding of GE issues and develop the skills necessary to incorporate it into their own teaching. I have been a member of the DICE Project for the entirety of my career within ITE and have been involved in significant changes in that time which has seen this work become more embedded into the core work of each institution. For the first time in Ireland, all providers of ITE within the primary sector now have permanent members of staff employed to teach GE, which has meant that the inclusion of GE within ITE

² Comhlámh are an Irish member-based organisation focused on promoting responsive, responsible international volunteering and development work.

programmes is no longer dependent on unstable contracts or the need to continually seek institutional commitment. This is significant within the field as the inclusion of GE within ITE is usually contingent on individual teacher educators availability and interest rather than an overall institutional commitment to support the work (Schugurensky and Wolhuter, 2020). Furthermore, although both initiatives have a long history, with DICE involved in ITE programmes since 2003 and Ubuntu since 2006, for many years the teaching delivered remained optional for students. Only in the last ten years, since changes to the provision of primary ITE in Ireland, have DICE lecturers been involved in delivering GE as part of the core modules on the majority of programmes, with some outliers still remaining without any formal GE provision.

The ongoing integration of both DICE and Ubuntu into ITE in Ireland has ensured that issues related to GE have continued to have a voice within the sector and an influence in the evolving landscape of ITE provision on the ground. Indeed, both DICE and Ubuntu have been heavily involved in the recent reshaping of the educational policy landscape. Ubuntu has contributed to the reshaping of the curriculum at post-primary level which has seen increased time allotted for GE. While DICE continue to be involved in the ongoing current revisions to the primary school curriculum, which proposes including global citizenship education for the first time, though current drafts do not make it clear what format this will take. Both DICE and Ubuntu contributed to the new Céim standards for ITE which include GCE as a core component for the first time ever and ensures that GE occupies a status as a core component of ITE which cannot be easily removed or side-lined in favour of competing areas. It is pertinent to recognise the significance of this promising trajectory in the policy landscape in Ireland as it is unusual to have the support of government guidelines for GE across the continuum of educational provisions (Schugurensky and Wolhuter, 2020). Furthermore, recent UNESCO consultations in relation to countries' implementation of SDG goal 4.1, which focuses on the integration of GE into education, indicates that ITE provision in this area is lagging behind progress seen in other sectors, stating that "insufficient teacher training remains a stumbling block" (UNESCO, 2018b), further highlighting the significant of the progress being made within ITE in Ireland.

1.3.3 The “I” who Teaches

In ‘*The Courage to Teach*’ Palmer (1998) encourages us to come to know ourselves better to enable us to be more present and responsive educators. He (ibid, p.2) states that “teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse”. My journey to becoming a teacher educator is at the core of my research. Indeed, much of my time over the course of this research project has been concerned with my coming to know myself better as a teacher educator. Additionally, an awareness of who I am as a teacher educator was crucial in undertaking a self-study action research project which focused on my practice. Cohen et al. (2018, p.303) maintain that reflexivity is essential in order for the researcher to “consciously and deliberately acknowledge, interrogate and disclose their own selves and the research, seeking to understand their part in, and influence on, the research”. Furthermore, Fook (2019) holds that reflexivity involves understanding who we are and the ways in which our thinking and actions are influenced by wider social influences and contexts. I offer the story of who I am as a teacher educator and the journey that brought me here as part of the context for this research study. I selected stories and moments in time that together make up the fabric of my personal and professional identity.

1.3.3.1 Becoming a Classroom Teacher:

My childhood was steeped in ethics and values. We had a fairtrade shop in our house when I was growing up. My parents would go to schools and teach about trade and global systems and bring the shop with them. I grew up in a house where we discussed human rights and politics regularly. My brother and I were encouraged to learn about the reality of the world and always told to be aware of our privilege and responsibilities as local, national and global citizens. Additionally, in my family, school was always an exciting place and education fiercely important. Throughout my childhood my mother worked as a classroom teacher, school principal, led the development of a community project, set up and worked in after school clubs and now works in a higher education institution as the coordinator of a project which supports schools whose pupils live with the challenges of poverty and marginalisation. Her approach to education as a tool for justice is what she instilled in me. As a result, my understanding of education has always been intertwined

with a commitment to justice and my journey to becoming a classroom teacher was influenced by a belief in education as a tool for justice.

I began my B.Ed. degree to become a primary school teacher at eighteen, having taken time out after secondary school to study art. While I enjoyed my classes, and loved teaching on placement, I struggled with the broader setting of ITE and the largely homogenous student cohort. From my secondary education, I was used to having classmates and friends from a variety of different social, ethnic and religious backgrounds and this was not reflected in college. I was jealous of my friends who were studying engineering and science and who had gone to large university campuses with extensive varieties of courses and diverse student cohorts.

In the summer before the final year of my degree, I spent 12 weeks in India teaching with an Indian NGO. Up until this point, I fully believed that when I finished my degree I would leave Ireland to teach and work somewhere in the Global South. I had a very strong interest in development issues and wanted to combine my passions. My time in India, however, gave rise to significant questions about the ethics of volunteer work. I began to question a lot of my assumptions around justice, development, and my place in the world. Although I didn't have the phrase 'white saviour complex' (Straubhaar, 2015), I knew I was uncomfortable with the idea that a 19-year-old who hadn't finished their degree somehow had all the answers in a school with many qualified and experienced educators. When I returned home, I knew that I was more comfortable putting my skills to use in Ireland. My passion for encouraging others to ask critical questions about the world and their assumptions began here.

In the final year of my degree, we were allowed to choose an area in which to specialise. I wanted to study special education and was heartbroken when I was not allocated a place in the over-subscribed module. Instead, I ended up getting a place in DE, and was bitterly disappointed. Due to a childhood immersed in politics, human rights, and discussions on justice, I felt I knew all there was to know about DE and wanted to specialise in something I felt I knew very little about. I very quickly learned how wrong I was. My biggest learning in life has been realising how much I do not know. I now teach the current iteration of that module and specialism. I tell this story each year to both excited and disappointed students starting in the specialism.

Similar to my approach in post-primary education, I worked just hard enough to get a good degree. I was privileged. My family background in education and lack of external pressures in my life meant it was relatively easy for me to complete my degree without stress.

I knew very early in my career that I did not want to remain as a classroom teacher, and so I was interested in learning as much as I could about schools and teaching before taking my next step. Throughout my short-lived career as a primary school teacher I committed myself to experiencing as many aspects of education and school settings as I could. I taught in schools of different religious and non-religious patronage, in both rural and inner-city schools, in single sex and mixed schools and also worked as a classroom teacher, special education teacher and special needs assistant during this time. Each of these experiences has helped me to form my values and beliefs about education and knowledge. Following a lifetime of involvement in education that sat at the fringes of formal and conventional models, I struggled to work within some of the more rigid settings of the formal education system. I never felt at home in a staffroom, always uncomfortable with small talk and feeling like I did not fit in. My experience was that many classroom teachers, though well-intentioned, were focused on the day-to-day of the curriculum and not the bigger picture. I was most definitely young, naïve and overly judgmental. But equally, I could not stay, I knew I had to move on.

Reflecting on my journey towards becoming, and short-lived career as, a primary school teacher, I feel lucky to have been supported to explore different options and to ask questions. I note that I struggled most when I felt confined by a homogenous student cohort, or by a curricular focused staff room, as these experiences contrasted significantly with those in my personal life outside of education.

1.3.3.2 Becoming a Teacher Educator

On returning to Ireland after completing my Master's degree in *International Approaches in Education with International Development* at the University of Birmingham, I knew I couldn't return to the primary school classroom. I sent my Curriculum Vitae to a wide variety of educational settings. Around that time my previous DE lecturer contacted me to

say she would be leaving her position and encouraged me to apply for her job. I became a lecturer at twenty-four years old.

As a beginning teacher educator, I struggled to connect with my students. I saw the same homogeneity I had struggled with as a student reflected in the class groups I was teaching. I began with a lot of assumptions and brought with me judgements I had made about student teachers when I was one myself. I engaged heavily in ‘chalk and talk’ believing that I had all the relevant knowledge and presuming that their knowledge baseline was too low for them to be able to engage critically. Additionally, I was acutely aware of being just a few years older than my students with limited ‘real world’ experience which also contributed to my closed approach to teaching. I didn’t expect to like the students with whom I worked. I believed so strongly in what I was teaching, but failed to believe in my students’ capacity to learn it, be interested in it, or to bring their valid knowledge and experiences to the classroom at that time.

I am so grateful to those students I had in my first years as a teacher educator who quickly turned my assumptions on their head. I learned to remind myself that others had not grown up with the same life experiences as I had, that it was unreasonable to expect students to come to their degrees with an awareness of the world in the way I felt I had. It was then that I learned the phrase ‘learning to unlearn’ (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008a), and knew that this would form a significant part of my approach to teacher education and help me to recalibrate my attitude towards myself as an educator and towards my students and their learning.

I had worked as a teacher educator for two and half years when I began my PhD journey and knew that I needed to learn how to better connect with students and how to share my passion for justice issues in a way that was accessible and non-threatening to them. I was very conscious of not wanting to alienate students, but wanting to develop my relationships with them, come to understand them better and develop empathy for them, something which I recognise I was lacking in my initial frustrations.

1.3.3.3 Navigating Challenges on the Journey to Becoming a Teacher Educator

Learning to navigate the challenges I encountered throughout my career has also shaped my knowledge of myself, my attitude towards my students, and my approach to my practice as a teacher educator.

The beginning of my career in higher education, like many people, was defined by short and unstable contracts. It was not until the end of the second year of my PhD that my position was made permanent. Prior to this point, I had not been able to make long-term plans, or to consider ways in which to ‘plant seeds’ with students and build on their learning over time. I had become accustomed to treating each semester, module, and session as if they could be the last, fitting in as much content as I could. The freedom that came with a more stable contract allowed me to relinquish the tight grasp I was holding over content delivery and begin to consider more student-friendly interactive approaches. This has been a crucial evolution in my practice as a teacher educator which I have been able to build on throughout the course of my PhD research.

Additionally, I learned to navigate challenges in relation to my health and the way in which it has impacted on my work. In August 2012, just before moving country to begin my Master’s degree, I began to experience pain for which there was no obvious cause. I have lived with chronic pain and fatigue every day since then. I do not look ‘unhealthy’ and to meet me you probably wouldn’t know that I have any medical challenges. However, I work daily to manage pain and fatigue that often follows no pattern and gives no warning prior to its arrival. Although my health has negatively impacted my life in many ways, long term ill-health also brings many lessons with it. It has made me more humble, more empathetic, and more reflective, qualities I feel necessary as a teacher educator. As a result of the health-related challenges I have encountered, I have been inspired to develop approaches to planning which are rooted in research, reflect best practice, and are robust enough to carry out even when unwell.

The completion of this thesis has been made more challenging as a result of my health. I worked full time for the first four years of my PhD which made it difficult to give time, mental space, and energy to my study and writing. It left me feeling inadequate for the first time in my educational life. I felt frustration at not being able to match my passion and

interest for the topic with the quality of writing and reflection of which I felt I was capable. Although exacerbated by challenges in relation to my health, through conversations within research circles and reading more, I came to understand these feelings were not unusual as a PhD student.

Finally, in experiencing what it meant to struggle with my education, I also developed my empathy for my students. Where previously I felt frustrated with students not grasping complex topics, I now approach teaching with more patience and awareness of the challenging experience that education can be. I also gained a deeper understanding, through experience, of the benefits of taking a slower approach to learning and allowing ideas to percolate and grow over time.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is presented in two sections. Section one spans Chapters Two, Three and Four and includes literature reviews and the process of developing a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*. Chapters Two and Three provide a contextual literature review for GE and critical thinking, the two core fields this research study is concerned with. Chapter Two outlines the relevant literature in relation to GE, where the complexity of terminology associated with GE and its' constituent educational approaches will be discussed. Additionally, the complexities associated with GE and considerations for its inclusion in ITE will be explored. Chapter Three encompasses a literature review in relation to critical thinking. This chapter explores definitions of critical thinking and includes considerations in relation to the purpose and potential impact of critical thinking. Additionally, Chapter Three explores literature in relation to the teaching of critical thinking. Finally, this chapter will identify and outline four key critiques of critical thinking.

Chapter Four, the final chapter within section one, details the process I underwent in developing a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* which reflects and builds on the review of literature in Chapters Two and Three, and evolved over the course of this PhD in response to research findings and critical professional conversations with colleagues. The model offers a new conceptualisation of teaching critical global learning. In Chapter Four I outline the key skills and considerations in relation to teaching critical

global learning which guided my subsequent data collection, analysis and presentation of findings before finalising the structure of the model in Chapter Nine..

Section two covers Chapters Five to Eleven and relates to details of the research study, its' outcomes and relevant discussion and considerations. Chapter Five details the methodological decisions made for this research project. Included within this chapter are details in relation to self-study action research and the specific data collection approaches I undertook for this study. Additionally, Chapter Five includes an outline of the analysis process I followed and comments in relation to validity of my research and ethical considerations which influenced my decisions. I undertook three cycles of action research and present the findings across Chapters Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine. In Chapter Six I outlined the findings from action research cycles one and two of data collection. Chapter Seven details the *Planning Tool* created in response to findings from action research cycles one and two. Crucially, the *Planning Tool* responds to the challenges experienced in cycles one and two which are included in Chapter Six. Chapter Eight outlines the findings from cycle three of data collection following implementation of the *Planning Tool*. This chapter includes both the successes of the *Planning Tool* and the challenges I experienced in implementing it. Chapter Nine presents the final structure of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and provide insight into how it was used during data collection and offer considerations for future use. Within Chapter Ten I consider my findings within the context of literature. I used the concept of tensions as a framework to present the discussion which are divided into pedagogical tensions, student specific tensions, and tensions presented by external influences. The conclusion to the thesis, Chapter Eleven, brings together the learning from my research and presents the combination of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and the *Planning Tool* as a conceptual framework which furthers our understanding of the teaching of critical global learning in ITE. Furthermore, Chapter Eleven includes an overview of the study and a comment on its limitations along with relevant considerations in light of the current COVID-19 global health pandemic. Finally, within Chapter Eleven I respond to my research question and the thesis aims and offer recommendations which follow from my findings.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced the self-study action research project I undertook. This research project is concerned with identifying effective practices to support student teachers to become critical global learners. This chapter introduced the research problem by providing an outline of the origin of the study and detailing the contextual considerations relevant to this study. Chapter Two includes a literature review in relation to GE and will offer an overview of the complexity of this approach to education including key definitions and considerations for teaching.

2 Global Education Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

GE is considered to be a catch-all term which encompasses multiple educational approaches each with distinct origins and properties but with a shared commitment to global justice (Wegimont, 2020). This chapter offers an overview of the complexity of defining GE by including brief summaries of each of its constituent elements. Furthermore, this chapter will synthesise the overlaps between the cognisant areas, proposing areas of commonality found in practice regardless of the terminology being used. One of the key commonalities between all areas is the positioning of criticality as a core skill for students to develop.

GE work is further contextualised through an exploration of current complexities faced by GE in the form of the recent rise in popularity of far right and narrow nationalist political agendas internationally (CoE, 2018; Westheimer, 2019; GENE, 2020b). Finally, I will offer an insight into practices in ITE with regards to GE.

2.2 Conceptualising Global Education

As outlined in Chapter One, GE encompasses many related educational approaches, namely: DE, HRE, ESD or EfS, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention, ICE, and GCE. Education with a global emphasis emerged as an educational response to conflict and extreme nationalism following World War II (Bourn, 2015b). This new international perspective in education was intertwined with the development of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) which aimed to unite people in our common humanity (Mallon, 2018). Pike and Selby (1988) who led the emergence GE as a distinct field by first drawing together approaches used in other fields and movements, position GE as an approach which combines world-mindedness, in its attention to topics, and learner-centeredness in its methodological approach.

Hunt (2012) declares that GE presents a challenge to learners to become comfortable with ambiguity and a multiplicity of perspectives due to its focus on challenging stereotypes. She (ibid) explains that GE is concerned with aspects of the curriculum which allow

learners to situate themselves within the wider world through an exploration of their relationships with others, including their histories, and asks them to reflect on their present realities and possible futures. Tye (1990) proposes ways in which ambiguity might be fostered in a classroom by affirming that GE involves learning about “those problems and issues that cut across national boundaries, about interconnectedness and recognising the importance of looking at issues through the eyes and minds of others” (quoted in Bourn, 2020, p.13). In connecting local and global issues, GE advocates for sustainable and thoughtful action to generate change (Hunt, 2012).

There is disagreement internationally about what terminology is the most appropriate and all-encompassing to describe this approach to education, with various government bodies, countries, organisations, and authors favouring different terms. Often GE or GCE are offered as the most suitable overarching terms to capture and synthesise the nuances of the varied and distinct approaches to education which focus on global justice issues. The complexity of choosing a term is highlighted by the variety of approaches which have been adopted in Ireland. DE is the favoured terminology within the Department of Foreign Affairs and amongst much of the relevant NGO sector. The DoE has a focus on both EfS and ICE. Whereas some individual NGOs, researchers, and educators favour and draw on HRE. The term GCE is also being used more frequently in new policy documents alongside DE. All of the listed approaches may vary in terms of their specific focuses and emphasis, however they are linked by a collective commitment to global justice. This diversity of approaches is highlighted in Irish reports to GENE Roundtables, in which GE is used as an umbrella term encompassing Irish Aid’s DE work and the EfS and ICE work of the DoE (GENE, 2020b).

Mirroring the arguments of Hunt (2012), who contends that it is the most easily understood and accessible terminology to use in education settings, this thesis adopts GE as the catch-all term intended to draw on and include the distinct approaches explored below. This decision contrasts with common practice nationally as DE is the term used more broadly in Ireland, and was the language used within my institution at the outset of this thesis. However, as a term DE often caused confusion for students unfamiliar with the development sector. Furthermore, GCE is commonly used within higher education and is gaining in popularity. However, I found that the focus on citizenship led students to make

strong correlations with particular curricular areas such as Geography and Social, Personal, and Health Education which limited the potential impact this area of education could have. Furthermore, the associations with nationalism and obedience has made citizenship a contested and controversial term (Carr, 1991).

Consequently, I purposefully moved towards and adopted GE as the terminology to use within my institution as I found that it provides the best opportunity to honour the nuances of each of the distinct approaches, while also providing a term which is easily understood and relatable for students who are often new to the field. While adopting GE as my chosen terminology, throughout this thesis, when drawing on the work of others who favour GCE or DE as the catch-all term, I will use the terminology which matches each authors perspective and so present GCE, DE and GE as interchangeable depending on authors individual choices.

Adopting the term GE is in line with the approach implemented by GENE, the network of ministries and agencies with national responsibility for GE in European countries. On recent review of the varied approaches and terminology used by their members, GENE continue to use GE as the term which brings together the different approaches (GENE, 2020b). GENE (2020a) found that the use of a common term is helpful in bringing together diverse and at times competing practices and languages. Adopting one coherent term facilitates a stronger coherence at policy level which can reduce competition among different traditions for educators. Additionally, GENE (2020b) claim that the use of an umbrella term can act as a quality control measure to ensure that none of the core tenets of GE are neglected, regardless of the terminology being used. GENE (2020b, p.26) list these non-negotiable core concepts as “a focus on global justice, on economic development and equality, on solidarity, on the relationship between local and global dimensions of justice, on action for greater human rights for all, and on planetary sustainability”.

The definition of GE adopted by GENE is taken from the Maastricht Declaration on Global Education in Europe:

Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all. GE is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and

Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimensions of Education for Citizenship.
(CoE, 2002)

In adopting this definition, GENE also declare that they pay particular attention to the term DE and welcome the use of specific national terms (GENE, 2020a). This definition acknowledges that there is significant inequality in the world and positions education as a potential catalyst for change in addressing injustice. This assertion is mirrored by the varied traditions which constitute GE but which each have their own nuanced approaches or origins.

Wegimont (2020) asserts that adopting the above definition as a catch-all to include the wide variety of educational traditions which are encompassed by GE has been useful at both European and national level for a variety of countries. The definition has enabled the promotion of policy development and has led to increased political support and funding for GE approaches across Europe over the last two decades (Wegimont, 2020). Although acknowledging that GE is the most appropriate term to use, each of its cognisant areas have unique origins and propose distinct focuses for education which will now be examined in more detail. A knowledge of their individual characteristics and histories is crucial to understanding what is meant by GE and what it should aim to represent and encompass in practice. Where possible, definitions from Irish authors have been used to develop an understanding of the national context for this research project.

2.2.1 Development Education

DE has historically been linked with overseas aid programmes and been used as a methodology to raise awareness of their projects, to justify government funding, and fundraise for NGO work in the field (Bourn, 2020a). In Ireland, DE continues to be almost exclusively funded through Irish Aid, a branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and is the GE approach and language most commonly found across the formal and informal education sectors in Ireland. DE is distinct from the other traditions in that its' origins are linked to aid programmes. Additionally, it has been strongly practitioner and NGO-led throughout Europe unlike other approaches which have often been led by Departments of Education (Bourn, 2015b).

The definition of DE most widely used nationally is from Irish Aid. They state that DE is “a lifelong educational process which aims to increase public knowledge and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live” (Irish Aid, 2017, p.6). In their most recent DE strategy, they have further developed this definition to highlight the central roles of challenging stereotypes and supporting learners to “critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives” (Irish Aid, 2017, p.6). Additionally, they (ibid, p.6) conceptualise DE as transformative by stating that:

It enables people to analyse and challenge the root causes and consequences of global poverty and inequality and to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and the lives of others. It aspires to change the way people think and act; empowering them to take action and become active global citizens in the creation of a fairer, more just, more secure and more sustainable world for all.
(Irish Aid, 2017, p.6)

Irish Aid’s definition is comprehensive in its inclusion of many aspects of DE and there is evidence of significant overlap between this definition and the core tenets of GE offered by GENE (2020a). What is evident in the definition from Irish Aid is the complexity of DE in its broad and varied aims. Tormey (2003, p.2) summarised the complex nature of DE by outlining that it is:

*Education as personal development, facilitating the development of critical thinking skills, analytical skills, empathetic capacity and the ability to be an effective person who can take action to achieve desired development outcomes. It is education **for** local, national and global development, encouraging and supporting learners in developing a sense that they can play a role in working for (or against) social justice and development issues. It is education **about** development, focused on social justice, human rights, poverty and inequality and other development issues locally, nationally and internationally.*

This definition conceptualises DE as constituting three interlocking elements: education as development, education for development and education about development. Education as development includes skills, such as critical thinking, necessary to engage in both personal development and influence development practices at various societal levels (Tormey, 2003). Education for development describes the potential transformative impact which DE can have personally for learners and more generally in wider society (Tormey, 2003). Education about development can be equated to knowledge about global systems and

issues (Tormey, 2003). The cultivation of key knowledge of global systems and the skills to critically engage with this knowledge and have empathy for fellow human beings are essential to ensure action is both transformative and culturally and historically sensitive. Additionally, Regan and Sinclair (2006) view knowledge as the “very fuel for the engine of development both in the ‘west’ and in the ‘Third World’”. In this way the three interlocking elements can be seen as interdependent. Constructing DE as constituting three interlocking elements of ‘as, for and about’ development has been echoed by Liddy who ultimately outlines that this educational approach “highlights the inequalities and injustices present across our globe, and advocates action for global social justice” (Liddy, 2013).

Despite varied approaches and definitions of DE, there are many common elements found across different authors and organisations internationally. Justice is a central DE theme which occurs repeatedly, over time and from different authors (Tormey, 2003; Skinner et al., 2013; Bourn, 2015b). Framing DE as a learning process rather than defining it by its outcomes draws attention to the skills which DE should develop in learners (Irish Aid, 2017). Learning to think critically is seen as a key skill to ensure DE begins to question and transform existing local and global power structures rather than just observing them (Tormey, 2003; Andreotti, 2006; Waldron et al., 2012; Liddy and Parker-Jenkins, 2013; Bourn, 2015b; Conklin and Hughes, 2016).

At the core of DE is a call to action to do something with the knowledge being acquired about the world, to have a positive impact on development at local, national and international levels. The call to action constitutes education ‘for’ development, while knowledge transfer about the world is education ‘about’ development. Liddy outlines that education ‘as’ development “centres on empowerment, participation and expansion of human capacities” (Liddy, 2013, p.33). The development of critical thinking is a key skill necessary for the success of DE, and as such can be constructed as core to education ‘as’ development also.

2.2.2 Human Rights Education

HRE can be traced back over seventy years to when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was written in 1948. In its preamble it is stated that education must strive to “promote respect for these rights and freedoms” (UN General Assembly, 1948).

Although promoted through the UDHR since 1948, HRE did not gain traction internationally until the mid-1990s when there were increased UN initiatives encouraging member states to engage with their responsibilities and obligations in this area (Struthers, 2015). As a consequence of its strong links with international policy agreements from both the UN and the CoE, HRE has had a high profile in many countries (Bourn, 2015b). Additionally, due to its strong policy profile, HRE has had considerable influence within school curricula internationally, particularly in relation to civics or citizenship education subjects. However, despite its respected reputation, HRE has historically had a lower academic profile and often lower funding support from governments than other educational traditions within GE (Bourn, 2015b).

Similar to Tormey's (2003) conceptualisation of DE as three interlocking elements, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET), adopted by the United Nations (UN) in December of 2011 also conceptualises HRE as tripartite, including education about, through, and for human rights (Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2011). The UNDHRET promotes HRE with the intended purpose of building and promoting a universal culture of human rights (ibid). Struthers (2015) declares that the three elements are co-dependent, and to focus on any one in isolation would not be sufficient to meet the goals of HRE, as defined by the UN. The three interrelated approaches are evident in the definition offered by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) (2011, p.7) who state that:

A comprehensive education in human rights not only provides knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms that protect them, but also imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life. Human rights education fosters the attitudes and behaviours needed to uphold human rights for all members of society.

While acknowledging that the tripartite approach to HRE promoted within the UNDHRET has the potential to improve practices and support countries in meeting their obligation around HRE, Struthers (2015) found that often in practice countries were failing to meet the requirements of the UN framework. Her research (ibid) suggests that a stronger curricular focus on human rights, which would mirror the educators' enthusiasm for the topic, would address the failings identified. Furthermore, Osler and Starkey (2010) posit that although many countries claim to fulfil their obligations for HRE through a focus on

citizenship education in schools, what happens in practice is often a focus on national citizenship. They (ibid) argue that a focus on human rights should necessitate a more global view and that therefor HRE should explore citizenship at all levels from local and national to global.

Although not sufficient to address the need for additional curricular time for HRE, the approach taken by Amnesty International, the predominant provider of HRE resources and supports for schools in Ireland, is promising in terms of their focus on broad conceptualisations of citizenship. They state that HRE is crucial to empowering “the next generation to develop the skills and attitudes that promote equality, dignity and respect in your community, society and worldwide” (Amnesty International, 2020). Accordingly, through building awareness around human rights, HRE holds the possibility to have a transformative impact for individual learners and potentially on society.

While HRE shares similar values with the other educational traditions encompassed within GE, it is distinct in its singular focus on promoting and protecting human rights, an aim which is not explicitly mirrored by the other traditions. HRE is an important element of GE which ensures a consistent focus on international human rights frameworks and obligations and is a core theme consistently named within GENE’s definitions.

2.2.3 Education for Sustainability

EfS has emerged internationally as an approach to education aimed at supporting societies to learn to live together sustainably (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2002). In striving for a more sustainable world, there is a need to support learners to understand the complexity of sustainability challenges the world is facing, and to enable them to engage in decision making and action to resolve these problems (Taylor et al., 2015). There are ongoing debates around the most appropriate terminology to use in describing this element of education. Some authors continue to focus on the root approach of environmental education, while others focus on either ESD or EfS. The term sustainable development first emerged in the report by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 where it was defined as:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given;

- and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

(UN, 1987, p.1)

The definition offered within the Brundtland report has been incorporated into ESD policy nationally in Ireland and internationally by the UN as a response to climate change and issues of sustainability within societies. The UN declared 2005-2014 the decade of ESD with the aim of encouraging wider engagement with and adoption of ESD in all aspects of education and learning internationally. This decade was a catalyst which sparked engagement in ESD for many member states who began to develop their policies and examine their national curricula. UNESCO (2019) promote the adoption of ESD as a means to encourage learners to become responsible individuals who act to resolve problems, respect diversity and contribute to creating a more sustainable world. Similarly, the National Strategy on ESD developed by the DoE in Ireland adopts the definition of sustainable development offered in the Brundtland report and characterises sustainable development as a “continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and into the future” (DoE, 2014, p.6). The approach taken in Irish policy is human centred in its continued focus on placing economic and societal factors before ecological and environmental aspects of sustainability.

Three pillars of sustainability often referred to are the economy, the environment, and society. The pillars are often presented as overlapping but equal in size and emphasis, implying that any solutions to issues of sustainability must address all three spheres. Mensah and Casadevall (2019) cautions that when making decisions in relation to sustainability, decision-makers will always have to trade-off among the pillars. This is echoed by the DoE (2014) in Ireland. They acknowledge that a necessary element of ESD must be education around the difficult compromises which will be required when approaching sustainability issues accepting that the needs of each pillar are often competing and incompatible. In recognising this complexity, Sachs (2015) stresses that

fundamentally, sustainable development is about problem solving while balancing these three spheres.

In 1992 the UN held their first conference on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro which aimed to formulate an agenda to promote sustainable development internationally. Similar to the approach of UNESCO and the DoE, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro produced *Agenda 21*, which placed central importance on the role of education by stating that “education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of people to address environment and development issues” (United Nations Sustainable Development, 1992, no page). Similarly, Taylor et al. (2015) position education’s role as crucial in developing the range of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours necessary to address the environmental and development issues inherent to sustainability. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2005) recognises the importance of ESD and claim that it holds the potential to provide societies with opportunities and skills to critically reflect on issues of sustainability with the ultimate aim of empowering the generation of new idea, visions, methods and solutions. They (ibid) see the purpose of sustainable development as building capacity of individuals, groups, communities, organisations and countries to make more sustainable choices.

In discussing the frequently used definition of sustainable development offered in the Brundtland report, Taylor et al. (2015) highlight the ongoing debate around the use of the term sustainable development by stressing the problems with its human-centred focus. Furthermore, they (ibid, p.2) present the arguments taken by many in the field who suggest that the term “sustainable development” reflects a “a dominant neo-liberal and human-centred worldview that prioritises economic development over ecological sustainability”. They instead adopt the term “sustainable patterns of living” as an alternative to “sustainable development” mirroring the approach taken within the Australian curriculum. Taylor et al. (2015) maintain that EfS addresses the weaknesses in ESD which many believe promotes a growth approach to sustainability. Instead, they (ibid) propose an approach to sustainability education which advocates for a change in social and economic systems to reduce demands on nature and suggest that EfS is the more appropriate representation of these goals. While ESD is the more popular terminology found in policy documents internationally, in my work with students, I adopt the term EfS to avoid the

association with growth that the word development has elicited for them in the past and re-focus on social change as the focus of sustainability. Irrespective of the nuances in terminology, this element of GE is chiefly concerned with supporting its students to reorient their thinking and consider alternative approaches to global systems and our lifestyles in order to contribute towards the development of societies that are more prosperous, inclusive, sustainable and well-governed (Sachs, 2015).

2.2.4 Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention

Peace education has origins in peace studies which was developed as a ‘science of peace’ in the 1950s as a counteraction to the science of war which has led to an abundance of mass killing up until then (Harris and Howlett, 2013). The themes included in early peace studies were disarmament, causes of war, conflict theory, international relations, and military spending (Harris and Howlett, 2013). Peace studies evolved into peace education as a result of peoples’ fears of a nuclear war between the USA and the Soviet Union which resulted in the organisation of workshops, classes, courses, and protests to teach people about military policies and try to enact change in the name of world peace (Harris and Howlett, 2013). Peace education can thus be characterised as a grass roots movement founded in a desire for justice with a belief that spreading knowledge and engaging the public in collective action was the best means for achieving their goals. Danesh (2008) maintains that in order to achieve its goals, peace education must be chiefly concerned with worldview transformation. Acknowledging that many societies have their roots in conflict and violence, he (ibid) proposes peace education as the most appropriate tool to affect change and support a change in worldviews towards peacebuilding.

A clear consensus on what constitutes peace education does not exist; distinct and varied approaches can be found across practice and literature internationally. These have included understanding the perspective of the ‘other’, conflict resolution skills, exploring larger issues of equality and justice in society, and linking it to the fields of HRE, multicultural education and environmental education (McCorkle, 2017). McCorkle (2017) makes the case for peace education maintaining its original focus on problematising war. He maintains that refocusing peace education on critiquing war can lead to a broader critique of dominant historical narratives resulting in a more responsible citizenship engagement for learners which can progress military policy in more peaceful directions (McCorkle,

2017). Contrastingly, Danesh (2008) takes a more skills-based approach to peace education in arguing that peace education is at its most effective, with longest lasting results, when it is chiefly focused on developing peaceful behaviours in its learners. He (ibid) maintains that in developing peaceful behaviours in individuals, this will have resultant knock-on effects resulting in more peaceful societies. Additionally, Danesh (2008) recommends critical thinking as a crucial skill in enacting this change as worldview transformation requires self-analysis and critical evaluation of widely accepted narratives, skills integral to critical thinking. Harris and Howlett (2013) also highlight the importance of critical thinking as an element of peace studies, which they outline has been defined by explicit questioning of the hegemony of the US military establishment.

Although listed as an element of GE in GENE's definition, peace education does not have the same status in policies or level of funding as other GE approaches in many European countries. Lehtomäki and Rajala (2020) highlight the radically reduced number of academic studies that relate to peace education since the 1990s and posit that this may reflect the way in which peace education has been conceptualised. Peace education was formerly understood as an umbrella term similar to GE which included a variety of themes, but following the definition of GE presented in the Maastricht declaration, has become known as a narrower concept presented as just one element of GE (Lehtomäki and Rajala, 2020). Furthermore, Bourn (2015b) posits that peace education has not gained political support in terms of policy development or funding due to the political nature of its content reflected in its strong critique of war.

2.2.5 Intercultural Education

Similar to other GE approaches, there is a lack of consensus around terminology associated with ICE. Some of the related and overlapping fields include multicultural education, multi-ethnic education, cross-cultural education, and immigrant education. Within Europe, ICE is used almost exclusively and is often seen as the terminology of choice within educational policies. While there is debate as to the best term to use, with many authors promoting a multicultural approach to education, due to its prominent use in both the formal and informal education sectors in Ireland, this section will focus exclusively on ICE (See Coulby, 2006 and Fiedler et al., 2008 for further discussion on the evolution of terminology in this area).

ICE has developed in response to the challenges that arise in increasingly multicultural societies (Peinado, 2011). ICE recognises the links that exist between poverty, conflict and migration and is thus cognisant of broader issues of injustice beyond cultural diversity (Peinado, 2011). This assertion is particularly evident in the definition offered by the NCCA in Ireland who have developed guidelines for ICE in schools. They (2005, p.3) define ICE as “education which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all areas of human life [and] which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and promotes the values upon which equality is built”.

With the aim of progressing the aims of ICE internationally, specifically promoting harmonious integration within multicultural communities, the OECD developed a Global Competencies Framework to explain, foster and assess adolescents’ global competence (Figure 3).

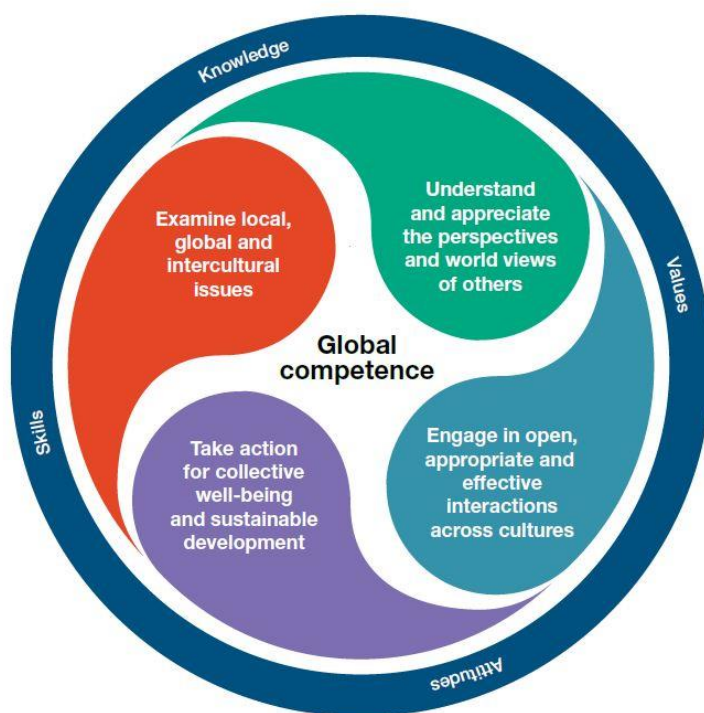


Figure 3: The Dimensions of Global Competence, OECD (2018)

Their intention was to provide a tool for policy makers, leaders and educators to use in developing approaches for supporting their learners’ development of global competencies (OECD, 2018). Although there have been critiques of the Global Competencies

Framework (Engel et al., 2019; Ledger et al., 2019), it provides an opportunity to address the weaknesses identified in approaches to ICE and the impetus for government bodies to provide training and follow-up support to classroom teachers and schools in implementing this work. The dimensions of the OECD Global Competencies Framework propose an alignment between ICE and citizenship education due to their focus on participation in society.

Within Ireland, intercultural policies which respond to cultural diversity in society began with a focus on the Irish Travelling Community, an indigenous, nomadic, and culturally distinct minority group. In 1995 the government published the *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*, which highlighted the high levels of exclusion experienced by Travellers in Ireland and made proposals for necessary changes to address this. Some of these recommendations are reflected in the 2002 *Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools*, to date many of the recommendations have still not been implemented.

Bryan (2008, p.48), in examining the approach to ICE taken in policy and curriculum documents in Ireland, argues that it is “more likely to reproduce, rather than to contest racism and racist ideologies”. Although acknowledging the egalitarian aims of ICE, Bryan (2008) contends that in practice, this educational approach can reinforce the ‘otherness’ and ultimately abnormalise diversity. This is evidenced in the commonplace practices of ‘intercultural days’ and other celebratory events and activities which have often been found to be tokenistic and risk consolidating the status of ‘other’ on migrant pupils (Devine, 2009). This critique of ICE activities and events being superficial is common internationally and is often summed up as ‘saris, samosas and steel bands’, approaches that focus on exoticising diverse cultures rather than taking more critical approaches which focus on anti-racism and fostering a sense of a shared humanity (Troyna and Williams, 1986).

2.2.6 Global Citizenship Education

The final educational approach within GE is GCE which is an evolution of citizenship education is considered to integrate the aims of GE with those of citizenship education (Davies, 2006). Davies is not alone in their assertion that GCE is a broader term than GE. Indeed, Estellés and Fischman (2020) declare that many scholars conceptualise GCE as an

evolution of previous models which incorporates all the positive goals and practices from previous approaches. Davies (2006) further asserts that the inclusion of the word citizenship denotes an additional dimension of GE. Citizenship has implications for rights and responsibilities that she (ibid) contends may not necessarily be made explicit in GE. Although many argue that GCE is the more appropriate umbrella term, this thesis follows the approach of GENE in using GE as a catch-all term that includes GCE as an element.

Priestley et al. (2010, p.27) warn readers that global citizenship has “become a fuzzy catch-all phrase, often ill-defined and poorly conceptualised”. Highlighting the concern that GCE can be too abstract to be valuable, Davies (2006, pp.13-14) identifies four different permutations of GCE found in practice:

- a) *Global citizenship + education (definitions of the 'global citizen', and the implied educational framework to provide or promote this);*
- b) *Global + citizenship education (making citizenship education more globally or internationally relevant; think global, act local);*
- c) *Global education + citizenship (international awareness plus rights and responsibilities);*
- d) *Education + citizenship + global (introducing 'dimensions' of citizenship and of international understanding into the school curriculum, but not necessarily connected).*

Davies et al. (2005) caution against education models which simply add global activities into citizenship programmes. We can therefore presume that they advocate for permutation (a) above, which advocates for the development of global citizens.

For UNESCO, the focus on GCE evolved out of a desire for education to “prevent violence, to strengthen a climate of tolerance and security, and to foster the development of values of peace, tolerance, and mutual understandings as well as capacities for the non-violent resolution of conflicts” (Pigozzi, 2006, p.3). It is clear that at the core of UNESCO’s approach is a focus on international relations and ensuring that increased migration and interdependence do not lead to conflict. This can be linked to the origins of peace education as advocated for by the UN.

Like other approaches within GE, defining GCE is contentious due to the different interpretations and approaches taken by different practitioners. Dill (2013, cited in Goren and Yemini, 2017) identified two distinct strategies to GCE that are most common. These are the global competencies approach which focuses on supporting learners to develop skills necessary to live in a globalised society, and a global consciousness approach which contrastingly focuses on supporting learners to develop a global orientation, empathy, and cultural sensitivity which stems from humanistic values (Dill 2013, cited in Goren and Yemini, 2017). The two approaches proposed by Dill can be further simplified to distinguish between a focus on skills versus a focus on values and attitudes. In their curriculum for GCE, Oxfam (2015) include the three components of knowledge and understanding, skills, and values and attitudes. WorldWise Global Schools (2020) include these same three components, but additionally include a further two: taking action, and methodologies. From the approaches taken by Oxfam in the UK and WorldWise Global Schools in Ireland, it is clear that their intention is to combine the approaches identified by Dill, focusing on them simultaneously rather than viewing them as separate approaches. Similarly, UNESCO (2015) has identified three core conceptual dimensions of GCE, which can be mapped very closely to the components proposed by Oxfam and WorldWise Global Schools. They are cognitive (including the acquisition of knowledge and development of critical thinking in relation to the interconnectedness of different countries), socio-emotional (including a sense of belonging, common humanity, sharing of values, responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for diversity), and behavioural (encompassing effective and responsible action) (UNESCO, 2015).

Despite being presented by many as universal good practice, GCE and the notion of global citizenship have been the subject of much debate and some strong criticism. Critiques of GCE often relate to western assumptions embedded within the approach (Andreotti, 2006; Goren and Yemini, 2017). Andreotti (2006, p.44), drawing on the work of authors who critique the notion of global citizenship, emphasises that the lived practice of GCE often promotes Western values and interests as universal or global, which in turn “naturalises the myth of Western supremacy in the rest of the world”. In addressing these critiques of GCE, Andreotti has developed a framework for soft and critical GCE in which the terms are hierarchical, and a move towards more critical approaches is encouraged. This framework is presented later in this chapter.

2.2.7 Synthesising Different Approaches

Examining the meaning behind the Maastricht definition, seen as a ‘gathering forces’ definition bringing together practices from each distinct field, Wegimont (2020, p.28) declares that GE is concerned with “understandings of the world, of education and of the relationship between the two”. In seeking to find common ground between their distinct traditions and approaches, policymakers involved in GENE continuously and actively seek out what unites their approaches. GENE suggest that the overlaps include “a global justice perspective, a focus on how the local relates to the global, and the aim to enable learners to take action to make the world more just, more sustainable, and more supportive of solidarity” (GENE, 2020b, p.25).

While there is no definitive curriculum for GE, the overlapping constituent approaches focus on topics related to justice, inequality, and human rights. These can include sustainability, diversity, conflict, power relations, and gender, to name a few that feature in the GE modules explored in this study which reflect the approach taken in Ireland. In the UK, the Department for Education (DfE) and Department for International Development (DfID) authored a report in 2005 calling on schools to incorporate a global dimension. The eight key concepts of the global dimension which they proposed display significant overlap with the topics just mentioned. They are global citizenship, interdependence, social justice, diversity, human rights, sustainable development, values and perceptions and conflict resolution (DfE and DfID, 2005). Furthermore, Hunt (2020) identifies as a key characteristic of a global learning school that it has adopted a critical social justice approach. As will be explored further later in this chapter, moving away from a charity mentality and specifically challenging approaches that focus on fundraising as a solution to issues of justice and inequality is promoted by many as a core tenet of many of the traditions within GE (Andreotti, 2006; Bourn, 2015b; Simpson, 2016; Hunt, 2020). In contrast to a charity approach, a social justice approach to education requires critical engagement and a commitment to continually questioning power structures and justice (Hunt, 2020).

A further area of convergence for the various approaches within GE is their focus on the development of key knowledge, skills, and dispositions. While each area has its distinct aims, there is a common focus on building understanding of global justice issues and an

awareness of global systems alongside the skills to apply that knowledge through the generation of new ideas and responses to injustice. Furthermore, the dispositions evident across the varied approaches include values and attitudes which promote equity, respect and empathy. Global education in all its traditions aims to foster in students compassion for their fellow humans and an enthusiasm for learning about and acting on the world and should further inspire students to imagine alternative futures. Critiquing Global Education

As evidenced in the descriptions above, there is ambiguity about conceptualising many of the educational approaches within GE which can lead to complexity in terms of implementation due to variation in interpretations (Bourn, 2020a; Scheunpflug, 2020; Wegimont, 2020). Without a clear consensus on how GE, including its constituent approaches, should be implemented, individuals and organisations are free to develop their own interpretations. Bourn (2020) highlights that GE is commonly carried out by NGOs who have often prioritised their organisational agendas over other educational or critical justice goals. Additionally, as GE moves further into the mainstream space, supported by government funding and policies, there has been a tendency for the message and core values to be weakened in an attempt to appear palatable to society (Bourn, 2020a).

Additionally, at classroom level, there can be significant differences between individual teaching approaches to including GE topics, often considered controversial. Philpott et al. (2011, p.33) state that “the ways that teachers and schools deal with controversy range from purposeful avoidance of them to one-sided advocacy of particular points of view”. Similarly, Schweisfurth (2005, p.232) found, when reviewing UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project Network, that “the more important a topic is, and the greater the need to address it, the more likely it is to be controversial and therefore avoided”. The challenge of individualised approaches to GE is mirrored by Bourn (2020). Often governments or organisations can use the promise of inclusion and justice to mask agendas frequently linked to furthering nationalism which neglect critical and reflective approaches (Bourn, 2020a; Scheunpflug, 2020). A contributing factor which has allowed GE to continue to follow diverging approaches in different contexts has been the lack of clarity around how to track and use evidence, including the need to develop robust yet critical approaches to gathering evidence of impact and best practice in GE (Scheunpflug, 2020; Wegimont, 2020).

2.3 Contextualising Global Education

The policy context within individual countries is significant in shaping the GE practice on the ground. Where GE is supported by policy, it is seen integrated into schooling, and funded projects from NGOs are evident across the education sector. The location of policies also impacts the nature of the GE work. In many countries GE related policy is located not within departments of Education but within Departments of Foreign Affairs. This approach impacts the direction and objective of GE work which receives government funding and support. There is a common focus on outcomes in national policy documents, emphasising students becoming active and informed citizens. However, these outcomes are often aspirational in nature rather than being clearly defined or having quantifiable outcomes. Peterson and Warwick (2015) contend that the weak disciplinary boundaries which result from positioning GE as a cross-curricular subject causes lack of clarity for educators on how to define and approach GE in practice. While many researchers position GE as a pedagogical approach or a field of education, the loosely defined aspirational nature of many policy documents positions it as a policy initiative.

In North America, GE suffers from a lack of a clear curricular home in all three countries (the USA, Canada, and Mexico) (Peck and Pashby, 2018). While it is common to see a commitment to the values or aims of GE within national and local education policy documents, curriculum narrowing due to neoliberal policies and financial pressures, has meant in many instances that there is a piece-meal approach and dependency on individuals to champion and progress the work.

Similarly, in Europe we are witnessing an increase in neoliberal policies and a political shift to the right in many countries, which impacts on the backdrop of GE work. However, in contrast to North America, we are seeing an increase in educational policy commitments to GE across Europe in recent years. Historically, GE policies have been located within Departments of Foreign Affairs in many European countries, however there is an increasing trend towards strengthening commitments to GE in emerging curricula across many countries (GENE, 2020b).

GE work in Australia and New Zealand is also often funded by the Departments of Foreign Affairs like in many European countries. Where GE in Europe has had to respond to the

history of many European countries as colonisers, European colonisation and successive waves of migration have led Australia and New Zealand to become two of the most culturally and ethnically diverse countries in the world. Both countries have complex histories in relation to the treatment of indigenous peoples and support for non-white immigrants. GE policy and focus in both countries has had to be responsive to this context. Peterson et al. (2018) highlight that although GCED is found repeatedly throughout national curricula and policy documents, it is very loosely defined and lacking clear, achievable and measurable learning outcomes. Furthermore, while there is evidence of support for GCE within education within ITE and from teachers, there is very limited support for teachers and schools to connect GCE concepts and the curriculum. Peterson et al. (2018) found a disconnect between policy rhetoric or intention and curriculum content – while there is an intention for GE to permeate the curriculum, teachers lack a unifying definition or coherent approach to do so. A key challenge to implementing effective and robust GE in Australian schools, one that is replicated internationally, is the focus on high stakes testing and preparing students for economic life, which has led to a disconnect between stated commitments to GE and practical decisions being made about what is included in curricula and what projects receive funding.

Global education is not a new phenomenon but has been around in different formats since at least the 1960s and has seen consistent growth since the 1980s (Peterson and Warwick, 2015). Peterson and Warwick (2015, p.23) highlight the importance of considering GE as a pedagogical approach, focusing on the “teaching methods, learning activities and the curriculum to develop knowledge, understandings, skills, capacities and dispositions”. In recent years there has been a trend in many countries to move from focusing on policy documents with aspirational and loose aims for GE towards developing participatory programmes alongside schools to support the practical incorporation of GE into classrooms. These are evident for example in Ireland (Worldwise Global Schools), England (Global Learning Programme (GLP)), and in Australia (Global Citizenship Schools). This shift moves from a focus on conceptualising GE as an educational field or simply a policy initiative to considering it a pedagogical approach. Positioned as a pedagogical approach, GE can be responsive to global events as they change the shape of our world and the nature of our interconnectivity across and within country borders. Bourn (2021, p.66), commenting on the future of education, highlights the need for education to

address and attend to issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, which have presented “fundamental questions about the form and nature of human existence on the planet”. The GLP in England positions global learning as an approach to learning which supports pupils to learn about and engage with global perspectives (Hunt and Cara, 2015). Rather than focusing solely on outcomes, as can be the case within a policy approach to GE, as an educational approach, GE can present multiple avenues for exploration, whether through different curricular areas, at whole-school level, or through a focus on specific pedagogies or topics. This conceptualisation is in line with that presented by Irish Aid, who position this work as a ‘holistic approach’ (Irish Aid, 2021). However, the remit within policy documents does not go beyond conceptualising outcomes and aspirational aims. Within recent research and literature produced in relation to GE, there is a move to go beyond conceptualising the field and outcomes of GE to consider and investigate how this is implemented in the classroom and what approaches work best.

2.4 Global Education and Critical Thinking

Within the various traditions of GE, critical thinking is recognised as a key skill which needs to be developed. Critical thinking is considered a core tenet of GE as it promotes considered reflection on, and questioning issues from various perspectives and contexts. MacCallum (2014, cited in MacCallum et al., 2020, p.162) considers global learning to be a “process of realised critical thinking” which allows for consideration of social, cultural, economic, political and environmental issues from multiple perspectives. In line with MacCallum’s (2014) assertion, I have centred critical thinking in this research and thus position it as the core skill that students should develop as part of their engagement with GE.

Bourn (2015b, p.114) posits that learning in this field “by its very nature can be unsettling to the learner” as it very often prompts significant levels of self-reflection in terms of personal values, attitudes and relationships with the wider world. Therefore, Bourn (2015b, pp. 115-116) situates critical thinking as a core element of his framework of DE and suggests that critical thinking in this context would include:

- *Imagining a range of global perspectives – looking at topics and issues through different lenses;*
- *Looking critically at the images of other countries that are presented in the media and by other organisations such as NGOs;*
- *Challenging assumptions about ‘how people live’;*
- *Looking at the causes of inequalities;*
- *Exploring power relations – including questions such as who has power, who is voiceless, and who benefits?*
- *Exploring our own prejudices about poorer countries.*

Furthermore, it is commonly cited that many of the issues that global learning is concerned with are contested and necessitate engagement in discussion and exploration of multiple perspectives to support a broader awareness of issues and challenge dominant discourses (Andreotti, 2006; Shah and Brown, 2010; Hunt, 2012). Shah and Brown (2010) propose including the development of critical thinking as a core pedagogical approach in GE to address the challenging nature of GE topics. I used the approach developed and promoted by Shah and Brown (2010) as the starting point to develop a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* that synthesises key considerations from both the field of GE and of critical thinking. The model will be further outlined in Chapters Four and Nine.

2.5 Soft versus Critical Approaches to Global Education

One of the ways in which different approaches to the implementation of GE can be distinguished from each other is where they lie on a continuum of soft to critical. Soft GE can perpetuate international structures that create inequality by “locating the causes of poverty in the lack of resources and infrastructure in countries of the global South” (Waldron, 2014). Contrastingly, critical GE requires the learner to acknowledge and examine their complicity in global structures (Waldron, 2014). Many authors across the different GE approaches have used Andreotti’s (2006) juxtaposition of soft versus critical GCE to interrogate their practices and advocate for improved GE, using DE, ICE, or other approaches as their reference point. Drawing on the works of Dobson and Spivak, Andreotti (2006) proposes a framework of soft and critical approaches (Table 1). She (ibid) strongly contends that the conceptualisations of global justice and education that educators draw on are crucial in determining whether the outcomes are damaging or liberating for those involved and the societies they inhabit, both locally and globally.

According to Andreotti (2006, p.41), if the focus remains predominantly on soft approaches to GE, we risk current and future generations projecting “their beliefs and myths as universal” and, ultimately ensuring that power relations and violence similar to those in colonial times would continue to be reproduced. Critical approaches to GE are crucial to an approach to education that is aligned with the ideologies implicit in critical thinking. Soft global citizenship perpetuates systems of oppression and discourses of discrimination in telling people what to think and do and thus is not aligned with critical thinking (Khoo and McCloskey, 2015).

| | Soft GCE | Critical GCE |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Problem | Poverty, helplessness | Inequality, injustice |
| Nature of problem | Lack of ‘development’, education, resources, skills, culture, technology etc. | Complex structures, systems, assumptions, power relations and attitudes that create and maintain exploitation and enforced disempowerment and tend to eliminate difference. |
| Goal of GCE | Empower individuals to act (or become active citizens) according to what has been defined for them as a good life or ideal world. | Empower individuals to reflect critically on the legacies and processes of their cultures, to imagine different futures and to take responsibility for decisions and actions. |
| Strategies for GCE | Raising awareness of global issues and promoting campaigns. | Promoting engagement with global issues and perspectives and an ethical relationship to difference, addressing complexity and power relations. |
| Potential benefits of GCE | Greater awareness of some of the problems, support for campaigns, greater motivation to help/do something, feel good factor. | Independent/critical thinking and more informed, responsible and ethical action. |
| Potential problems | Feeling of self-importance and self-righteousness and/or cultural supremacy, reinforcement of colonial assumptions and relations, reinforcement of privilege, partial alienation, uncritical action. | Guilt, internal conflict, and paralysis, critical disengagement, feeling of helplessness. |

Table 1: Soft Versus Critical Approaches to GCE, adapted from Andreotti 2006

Although promoting a move towards critical GE and acknowledging the inherent problems with soft approaches, Andreotti (2006) concedes that in some circumstances, ‘soft’ GCE is the appropriate approach and can represent a significant step forward in their GE practice. For educators who are new to the field of global justice, soft approaches can be a supportive starting point for them on their journey toward criticality. However, Andreotti (2006) also cautions that while soft approaches might be appropriate for a group at a

certain time, they should not be an endpoint but a beginning on their journey towards deeper awareness and criticality.

Hunt (2012), Andreotti (2006) and Shah and Brown (2010) assert that the exploration of global issues in the classroom is not straightforward, but that the concepts are often contested and require significant unpacking. Andreotti (2006, p.41) outlines that GCE must address the “economic and cultural roots of the inequalities in power and wealth/labour distribution in a global complex and uncertain system”. Her (ibid, p.41) argument is that if we fail to sufficiently unpack the “complex web of cultural and materials local/global processes and contexts”, education can end up promoting unequal relations and perpetuating paternalistic systems of power which enable dominant groups to stay in control while taking up the “burden’ of saving/educating/civilising the world”. Using the example of the campaign *Make Poverty History*, Andreotti (2006) explains that many ‘soft’ approaches to GCE can be damaging in their lack of attention to power and voice. Instead, such campaigns have mobilised generations of young people to be involved in an approach to activism that does not emphasise an understanding of historic power relations and their links to current injustices and consequently presents an image of the global south as helpless and the west as saviours (Andreotti, 2006; Hunt, 2012).

Andreotti (2006) argues for critical GE to counteract the potentially damaging impact of uncritical campaigns and education, which does not pay due attention to the complexities of global issues. Within critical GE, learners would be given the opportunity to critically analyse their personal positions in relation to their culture and context, while also being encouraged to situate their learning within broader global structures and take responsibility for their decision making (Hunt, 2012). When engaging with global issues, students of critical GE will consider the historical and political contexts involved in these controversial topics while ultimately striving for change (Goren and Yemini, 2017). My decision to centre critical thinking within this study has been further motivated by a commitment to progressing my practices as a teacher educator in an increasingly critical direction in line with the conceptualisations of critical GE offered here.

2.6 Challenges for Global Education

GENE promote a critical and engaged approach to GE that is conscious of the many external influences which can affect the classroom and how GE is received and interpreted by learners and educators (Babel et al., 2018). One of the key challenges GE has faced as an educational approach grounded in its commitment to social justice, human rights and equality, is the rising support for political parties with narrow nationalist agendas (GENE, 2020b) and the increase in xenophobic populism and hate speech in societies (CoE, 2018). Westheimer (2019) cites the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit votes in 2016 as two examples in which the winning parties employed right-wing nationalism to rally supporters against the common enemy of ‘foreigners’, promoting racism and bigotry in politics. Banks (2017) offers further examples of the popularity of conservative political leaders across Europe and renewed contentious conversations around the legitimacy of integration, cultural diversity and the availability of citizenship applications to newcomers in Western countries. Banks (2017) cites terror attacks in Europe and the USA, the large influx of Syrian and Iraqi refugees into Europe and conflict between police and communities of colour as the stimuli for the rising support for xenophobia seen in societies. While Ireland is no stranger to extreme nationalism and both structural and social discrimination, we have not seen the same rise in support for far-right political parties that other countries have experienced. However, the COVID-19 global health pandemic has created opportunities for far-right groups to exploit people’s fears and has resulted in some increased support for extremist groups (Curran, 2020; Gallagher, 2020).

Furthermore, McCartney (2019) cautions that populism enables the erosion of democracy and democratic values. Democracy, by definition, values multiple perspectives and gives opportunity to opposing sides to be heard and allows citizens to make informed choices and find compromise. McCartney (2019) maintains that democracy is being lost through the rising support for narrow nationalist politics and that education must answer the call of John Dewey in ensuring that democracy is born new and fostered in every generation. Westheimer (2019, p.9) declares that the waning trust in democratic values and the “toxic mix of ideological polarisation” we are currently seeing in countries across the world makes it critical that education should ask learners to imagine more just societies, should provide learners with multiple perspectives on controversial issues, and should actively

teach them to be critical. He (ibid) believes that centring education on democratic values and promoting critical thinking is crucial to counteract rising xenophobic populism.

2.7 Global Education and Initial Teacher Education

It has been established that although external factors impact pupils' learning and performance in school, the most significant factor in determining the quality of the educational outcomes is the teacher (UNESCO, 2018a; Schugurensky and Wolhuter, 2020). Consequently, teachers also make the most significant difference in the quality of GE teaching and learning, which takes place in schools. Therefore, ITE is crucial in fostering the skills and knowledge teachers need to do so (Schugurensky and Wolhuter, 2020). Indeed, Schugurensky and Wolhuter (2020) posit that ITE is the most important avenue to ensuring long-term, sustained change for a more equitable and sustainable world, as advocated for by the SDGs. Furthermore, in outlining their expectation that teachers would prepare their pupils to be ethical, moral and responsible citizens in an interconnected and ever-changing world, UNESCO (2018a, p.5) states that "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and the quality of teaching. Therefore, building the capacity of teachers to meet the challenges of GCED is a top priority". A review of literature by Estellés and Fischman (2020) found GE to be a significant emerging topic within ITE literature as the volume of published research connecting the two fields has increased significantly over time.

In reviewing literature in relation to the incorporation of ESD and GCE across ITE internationally Bourn et al. (2017, p.9) identify a range of approaches, including:

- Training on the purpose and role of teaching and its wider social purpose within ITE.
- Content within ITE training for subject-based teachers, particularly in geography, sciences, citizenship/civics/social studies, and religious education.
- Specialist modules and courses, usually optional within ITE – often on longer teacher preparation courses.

- Courses aimed at existing or prospective teachers, such as undergraduate education degree courses and masters level programmes. (These may not be explicitly identified as teacher training.)
- Short sessions introducing trainees to these concepts, but with little depth.

The variety of approaches outlined here highlight the diversity of practice represented in ITE programmes internationally. All of these approaches are present within ITE programmes in Ireland and depend on the capacity of individual institutions and the support that the field is given at an institutional level. The impact of institutional and governmental support on the extent and quality of GE provisions is a common challenge within GE internationally (Bourn et al, 2017; Ekanayake et al., 2020; Schugurensky and Wolhuter, 2020). Furthermore, the impact that individual teacher educators can have on the nature and extent of GE in ITE is stressed by Bourn et al. (2017, p.8), who highlight that “with teacher educators often having autonomy in what they teach and how they train teachers, the focus on ESD and GCED can be limited and ad hoc in nature”.

Not only is it essential to be conscious of how GE is incorporated into ITE, but we must also be conscious of the approach taken. If we are to answer Andreotti’s (2006) call to move towards more critical approaches to GE in schools, we must engage with teacher education models that challenge global inequality structures. Education such as this in ITE requires that “student teachers come to ‘care about’ inequalities of power, recognition and distribution and that they recognise the role of structures and systems in perpetuating and maintaining them” (Waldron, 2014). Ultimately, if GE in schools is to become more critical in nature, GE in ITE needs to become mainstreamed and consistently support student teachers to develop their critical capacity. While GE continues to become more embedded in ITE in Ireland due to policy and government-funded programmes, this is not always the case internationally. Schugurensky and Wolhuter (2020) highlight the need for change in ITE provision of GE as they propose that in most ITE programmes across the world, GE is presented as an optional extra and does not prepare student teachers to teach in an interconnected global world.

Waldron (2014, p.108) contends that DE has ‘disruptive possibilities’ and that within ITE, the main challenge is whether teacher educators “are prepared to embrace the risk,

ambiguity and uncertainty” involved in engaging in this challenging model of education. Bergen et al. (2020) further highlight the need for ITE programmes to consciously attend to the socio-political context of teaching to ensure student teachers develop as critical global citizens prepared to challenge and support their future pupils. Boler (1999) invites educators and learners alike to walk the journey of ‘disruptive possibilities’ together and engage in critical enquiry of personal values and beliefs, and to examine their self-constructed images of themselves and others.

UNESCO (2018a) propose that GCE should aim to foster a variety of attributes in learners, including a deep knowledge of global justice issues, cognitive skills such as criticality, creativity and the ability to adopt a multi-perspective approach, non-cognitive skills such as empathy, communication, and conflict resolution, and behavioural capacities to act collaboratively and find solutions to global challenges. They (ibid) highlight the need for ITE programmes to embed these attributes in their approaches to teaching and learning to support student teachers to become global citizens themselves to enable them to foster these attributes in their future pupils. They (ibid) developed a template to direct teacher educators and teachers to useful GCE-related resources and materials, including critical GE frameworks and transformative pedagogies, to support teachers to integrate GCE into the curriculum and teaching practices alike with exemplars covering a broad spectrum of issues and pedagogies from existing resources.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a conceptualisation of GE, acknowledging the difficulty of this task given its status as a catch-all phrase made up of multiple educational traditions, including DE, HRE, ESD, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention, ICE, and GCE. Furthermore, this chapter offered an insight into the evolution of GE, including complexities currently facing the field today. Chapter Three will provide an overview of the field of critical thinking, including definitions, considerations for teaching, and a critique of critical thinking. The ideas explored in Chapter Three will be combined with those offered in this chapter to contribute to the conceptualisation of a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, which will be explored in Chapters Four and Nine.

3 Critical Thinking Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This study is concerned with identifying best practice in relation to critical thinking instruction within the context of GE's overall aims and objectives. Accordingly, this chapter explores the key concepts and considerations in relation to critical thinking and explores definitions and conceptualisations alongside commonly cited critical thinking skills. It also presents approaches to teaching critical thinking within ITE and common critiques found in the literature. This chapter aims to establish a knowledge base in relation to critical thinking which will be combined with key considerations in relation to GE to inform the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* outlined in Chapters Four and Nine.

3.2 Defining Critical Thinking

The 1990 *Delphi Report*, from the American Philosophical Association, reflects a landmark two-year project undertaken to establish an international expert consensus on the definition of critical thinking. The resulting definition, commonly used in critical thinking literature, maintains that critical thinking is:

...purposeful, self-regulatory judgement which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference as well as an explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgement is based
(Facione, 1990, p.3)

Furthermore, through an exploration of a variety of definitions of critical thinking, Fisher (2011) identified commonalities present across various definitions highlighting that many definitions present critical thinking as a skill-based activity which must meet various intellectual standards, including clarity, relevance, adequacy, coherence and that it requires the interpretation and evaluation of observations. Furthermore, many authors (Ennis, 1987; Daniel and Auriac, 2011; Johnson and Hamby, 2015) include within their conceptualisations of critical thinking an indication that its purpose is oriented toward the thinker making decisions and judgements about what to believe and how to act. Additionally, Fisher and Scriven (1997, p.21) propose that thinking is not critical simply

because the thinker aims to be, but that they must be competent in the associated skills. This is a significant development in the understanding of critical thinking; the implication is that for thinking to be considered critical, it must meet specific criteria and that a person can demonstrate different levels of competency (Fisher, 2011).

Fisher (2011) further maintains that the core of the original conceptualisation offered by Dewey remains constant throughout the various definitions offered in critical thinking literature. Dewey (1910, p.6), seen by many as the father of critical thinking in education, defines reflective thinking, widely accepted to be synonymous with critical thinking, as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends”. Glaser (1941) builds on Dewey’s reflective thinking conceptualisation by mirroring the contention that critical thinkers must employ persistent effort and highlight the need for critical thinkers to employ knowledge, skills, and attitudes that ensure they are disposed to examining beliefs and ideas. Furthermore, both Wechsler et al. (2018) and Elder and Paul (1996) conceptualise a core critical thinking disposition as the motivation and tendency to incorporate criticality into their thinking processes.

Significantly, McPeck (1981) distinguished himself from Dewey and Glaser by focusing on knowledge as a key precursor for criticality. McPeck (ibid) is a leading promoter of subject-specific criticality and does not believe it to be a transferable skill across disciplines. Similarly, Lipman (1988) maintains that while critical thinking skills may be generalisable, the criteria required to engage in and judge criticality is subject and context-specific. In contrast, Elder and Paul (1996) contend that a critical thinker must continuously self-assess their own thinking in all aspects of their lives, and therefore set up critical thinking as a generalisable skill. In support of this approach Fisher (2011) maintains that the skills involved in becoming a critical thinker, once mastered, can be applied across a multitude of contexts and scenarios.

Critical thinking has also been conceptualised as a multidimensional construct which includes cognitive, dispositional, motivational, attitudinal, and metacognitive functions (Bensley and Spero, 2014; Wechsler et al., 2018). Bensley and Spero (2014) define metacognition as an awareness and control of one’s cognition, and they position this self-awareness as central to critical thinking, enabling learners to assess their knowledge and

skill levels. This multi-dimensional approach is similar to the popular ‘head, heart and hands’ metaphor used within GE (Sipos et al., 2008). This metaphor maintains that to engage with issues of global justice to bring about positive social change, we must engage with the three dimensions of ourselves in our cognitive disposition, and our emotional understandings and also engage in action by applying our knowledge to enable a transformative impact on the world around us. Thus, linking the cognitive approaches of critical thinking to the emotional motivation to think critically is crucial in ensuring the resultant knowledge which emerges can be used for social good and aid in solving new and emerging global problems. This approach is advocated for in 21st century learning (Ananiadou and Claro, 2009; Wagner, 2009; Luna Scott, 2015).

While acknowledging that critical thinking can be viewed as multi-dimensional, it is more common for definitions of critical thinking to focus on the cognitive processes involved. The key processes identified across literature are ‘analysis’, ‘evaluation’ and ‘inference’ (Facione, 1990; Bensley and Spero, 2014; Dwyer et al., 2014). Dwyer et al. (2014) maintain that when used appropriately, the combination of these three processes increases the chances of identifying logical conclusions or solutions. The experts involved in contributing to the *Delphi Report* concluded that it may not be possible for any person to be an expert at all of the critical thinking processes, and that all people may find themselves more adept at critical thinking in some areas of their lives than others (Facione, 1990).

There is widespread agreement that the ability to question the world around us and the information we interact with is a key component of being a critical thinker (Bok, 2006; hooks, 2010; Dwyer et al., 2014). Moreover, Dwyer et al. (2014) posit that the value of questioning is that effective questioning allows the questioner to evaluate bias, identify oversights in arguments and interrogate motives behind statements and ultimately evaluate or assess the information they engage with. According to Paul and Elder (2016), human beings do not retain the skill of questioning throughout their lives but must work to cultivate it.

3.3 Beyond Critical Thinking – Considering Purpose and Impact

UNESCO, the OECD, and the Change Leadership Group at Harvard University have all identified critical thinking as a key skill necessary for future-proofed education, which prepares learners to live in the 21st century (Ananiadou and Claro, 2009; Wagner, 2009; Luna Scott, 2015). The purpose of critical thinking, promoted within the context of 21st Century Skills, is to enable learners to have a constructive and positive influence in addressing evolving problems and enact necessary change in responding to new and evolving challenges faced by communities globally (Luna Scott, 2015). The 21st Century Skills framework is not focused on liberation from oppression or challenging hegemonic political and social structures as is the focus of GE. It is instead focused on pre-empting and being able to respond to evolving challenges such as migration, changing markets, new technologies or transnational environmental and political challenges (Luna Scott, 2015).

Although many authors (see Brookfield, 1995 for discussion) in their writing about critical thinking make connections with social change, liberation and emancipation are not necessary outcomes of critical thinking. Linskens (2010) assert that while critical thinking is concerned with identifying falsehoods in ideas, it is not innately concerned with rectifying the consequences of these falsehoods. By contrast, critical pedagogy is, by definition, attentive to social change and justice through theoretical, political, social, and cultural framings (Giroux, 2011). What unites the various intellectual traditions that gave rise to critical pedagogy is an “uncompromising allegiance to the liberation of oppressed populations” (Darder et al., 2009, p.23). Freire (1970) cites critical thinking as a fundamental component of critical pedagogy in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, one of the foundational critical pedagogy texts. He (ibid, p.81) asserts that we must not simply critically reflect upon existence but critically act upon it. Commenting on *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Giroux (2010, p.716) proposes that for Freire, critical thinking was “a tool for self-determination and civic engagement” in presenting a way of breaking the cycles of history by “entering into a critical dialogue with history, and imagining a future that would not merely reproduce the present”. While this thesis does not focus specifically on critical pedagogy, the approach taken focuses on the conceptualisation of critical thinking which Freire uses as a tool to support learners to challenge orthodoxies and imagine and work towards alternative futures.

Gallant (2008) cautions that this change is not an easy process. Post-structural critical pedagogy promotes resistance to and challenging dominant discourses with an ultimate aim of action for change. Youdell (2006, p.35) posits that post-structural ideas “come out of a recognition that existing structural understandings of the world, whether these focus on economic, social, ideological, or linguistic structures, do not offer all the tools that we need”. However, existing discourses are often deeply ingrained in society’s psyche, which makes resistance difficult, despite the damage often caused by these discourses (Gallant, 2008). During times of transition and change, Freire (1974) outlines that society requires an especially flexible critical spirit. A crucial aspect of progressing meaningful change and engaging with criticality, as advocated for by post-structuralists, is to remain present and curious about the present and any new directions of society. Freire (1974) warns that an absence of criticality during times of transition can result in a repeat of damaging historical themes. Consequently, Freire (ibid) positions criticality as a crucial determining factor that influences the type of change that can arise from engagement with this type of education.

Absent from many philosophical interpretations and theories of critical thinking outlined earlier in this chapter is the lived experience of the emancipatory impact critical thinking can have when used within education to question status quo structures with the aim of enabling the liberation of those who have found their educational and daily lives limited and damaged by oppression. bell hooks (2010) outlines how this impacted on her schooling and subsequent professional life. She (ibid) benefitted from educators who were willing to question and challenge the hegemonic structures of patriarchy and racism. In outlining the transformation seen across the education system in the wake of the feminist revolution, hooks (2010, p.94) outlines that bringing feminist perspectives into the classroom which challenge the previously dehumanising and oppressive status quo “affirmed the primacy of critical thinking, of linking education and social justice”. This post-structural critical pedagogy approach to including criticality in the classroom demonstrates the potential for critical thinking to be a catalyst for change by opening learners up to alternative ways of thinking and challenging hegemonic thinking. The opportunity to challenge the status quo and imagine alternative futures can have an emancipatory impact on those in society living through oppression, as was the case for bell hooks within her education.

Freire and hooks both write about the need for all of us as human beings, as citizens, to dare to transgress and disrupt. For both authors, they speak from a lived experience of oppression and a knowledge of, and belief in, the transformative potential of practising and living criticality. Discussing Freire's influence on her work, hooks (1994) outlines their shared belief in critical thinking as the crucial initial stage of transformation in liberation struggles. She (ibid, p.47) talks about "that historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one's political circumstance". hooks (1994) outlines that people often underestimate the significance of changing your thinking and challenging attitudes previously considered indisputable. Although critical thinking does not by definition equate to social change, drawing on the work of critical pedagogues such as hooks, Freire, and Giroux, I present it here and in my teaching practices as a potential catalyst for change if accompanied by a focus on appropriate political, social, and cultural framings which challenge hegemonic discourses.

3.4 Critical Thinking and Education

Education has the potential to promote or suppress criticality depending on the curricular and pedagogical approach taken. For example, hooks (2010, p.23) described how prior to the civil rights and feminist movements in the USA, education was used to perpetuate damaging ideologies about race and gender. In contrast, these movements used education to question and critique the status quo and present alternative perspectives on race and gender. In this way, critical thinking is not a tokenistic or simplistic optional add-on to education but a necessity for progress and liberation due to its central role in questioning and challenging damaging societal orthodoxies. The outcomes of authentic critical thinking can have very real impacts on people's liberation from oppression (hooks, 2010).

The importance of fostering learners' critical capacities is clear in the examples above. Fisher (2011, p.11) likens critical thinking to an "academic competency akin to reading and writing", maintaining that within education reading, writing and critical thinking should be awarded equal importance. Lipman (2003) highlights that, although young children often display critical thinking skills through curiosity, imagination and inquisitiveness, often they do not retain these innate qualities as they grow older, and blames the school environment for this loss. Similarly, hooks (2010, p.8) notes that

children often lose their passion for thinking when “they encounter a world that seeks to educate them for conformity and obedience only”. Alternatively, Lipman (2003) recommends an approach to schooling which is more fluid and allows for children’s imaginations to flourish in order to foster the development of their naturally curious natures. Furthermore Sharples et al. (2017, p.1) highlight that increasingly research has shown that the development of critical thinking skills within education can have wider academic benefits by improving standards and strengthening reasoning and problem-solving capabilities for learners.

hooks (2010) links critical thinking inextricably with democratic education. Through education which is focused on the ideals of democracy and committed to social justice, students learn to question and become critical thinkers. Like Dewey, hooks (2010, p.14) proposes that democracy must be reborn in every generation so that freedoms can be maintained, or where necessary, fought for. Liberation is not a simple or fast action but an ongoing process that must be continually engaged with (Dewey, 1910; hooks, 2010). Where criticality, curiosity, and creativity are not fostered in education, it is not possible to nurture active democratic citizens committed to challenging injustice and improving society. Freire (1970) warns of the banking model of education which presents learners as adaptable and manageable, and in which a learner’s role is to store the knowledge they are given passively. In the absence of fostering curiosity and creativity, learners are less likely to develop their critical consciousness, intervene on, and act to transform the world (Freire, 1970). Therefore, of the banking model of education can be positioned as anti-democratic and oppressive in nature. In contrast to the banking approach, hooks (2010, p.27) advocates for educators to embrace education as a practice of freedom, as to do so is to deliberately choose to teach in ways that further the interests of democracy and justice and challenge a culture focused on oppression and domination. To engage with education as a practice of freedom, educators must necessarily promote critical thinking and move away from conventional practices in the classroom (hooks, 2010).

3.4.1 Critical Thinking and Initial Teacher Education

Given that critical thinking within education systems can significantly impact society, it follows that critical thinking should be a core component of teacher education programmes to ensure classroom teachers are equipped to incorporate critical thinking into their

practices in schools. This is highlighted by Maphalala and Mpofu (2017, p.9257), who, following a comprehensive literature review of critical thinking in ITE, established that “to achieve an academic world of thinkers, initial teacher education curriculums need to model critical thinking for students”. Indeed, Williams (2005) posits that our schools and ITE providers have central roles in promoting critical thinking practices and skills in societies to help effectively address the challenges of the 21st century. Commenting on the nature of the profession of teaching, Maphalala and Mpofu (2017, p.9256) state that “teaching requires individuals who are thinkers rather than technicians”.

Just as children often arrive in primary school with naturally curious tendencies, students in higher education usually arrive with limited critical thinking skills due to a poor foundation of skill development in their primary and secondary education (Ghanizadeh, 2017). This can present a significant challenge both for educators and students as assignments, tasks, and feedback in higher education are often centred around the idea of demonstrating criticality (Moore, 2013). Indeed, critical thinking has often been positioned as a core outcome of higher education (Lederer, 2007; Stupple et al., 2017). Additionally, in order to foster critical thinking in their pupils, classroom teachers must employ critical thinking skills themselves (Pithers and Soden, 2000; Williams, 2005; Sezer, 2008; Maphalala and Mpofu, 2017; Taşkaya and Çavuşoğlu, 2017). Williams (2005) highlights that it is unlikely that classroom teachers will become skilled critical thinkers if critical thinking is not emphasised and fostered in ITE.

Moore (2013) identified seven definitional strands of critical thinking from the perspectives of academics working across higher education, including judgement, scepticism, originality, sensitive readings, rationality, activist engagement with knowledge, and self-reflexivity. The multiplicity of definitions is significant as they offer an insight into the complexity of defining critical thinking and the multiplicity of expectations that students can experience when asked to ‘think critically’ in their approach to an assignment or task in higher education. This diversity of expectations coupled with students’ often poor foundation in general or transferable critical thinking can mean they are often ill-equipped to engage effectively with content, tasks, and assessments in higher education, and their academic achievements can suffer as a result (Ghanizadeh, 2017).

Not only can students' academic performance suffer as a result of a lack of critical thinking skills, a limited engagement with criticality at earlier levels of schooling can mean that students have had narrow exposure to diverse viewpoints, which results in a limited capacity to question and challenge the status quo. Piro and Anderson (2015) highlight the importance of developing critical thinking skills in preparing pre-service teachers for working in increasingly diverse classrooms and settings that they may have limited experience of from their personal lives. She (ibid) further highlights the importance of ensuring that instruction within ITE includes purposeful pedagogies focused on challenging stereotypes and assumptions with students.

Furthermore, education can be used as a tool of colonisation and indoctrination or can be a site for developing skills and dispositions to question and challenge common orthodoxies (McLaren, 2009; Subedi, 2013). There is a growing movement in higher education generally, and within ITE to decolonise the curriculum we use. This movement seeks to question and dismantle current approaches by promoting a curriculum that decentres Western knowledge in the curriculum and re-centres the multiple histories of black and indigenous populations globally (Meda, 2020; Arday et al., 2021). In particular, the decolonisation of curricula within ITE is crucial in ensuring future classroom teachers foster an approach to knowledge and information that centres multiple voices, which has the potential to reconstruct society's perception of knowledge and power (Lopes Cardozo, 2012).

In the absence of this approach to curricula in their primary and secondary schooling, and as a result of pervasive orthodoxies in society, by the time many students reach higher education, indoctrination can have profound roots. Subedi (2013) highlighted that the absence of a critical global curriculum can reinforce stereotypes or cause students to develop one-dimensional interpretations of the world. This can cause students to be resistant to new ways of thinking (hooks, 2010). Williams (2005) proposes that ITE is uniquely positioned to prepare future classroom teachers to promote critical thinking and the questioning of orthodoxies in their future classrooms by exposing them to open discussions on competing viewpoints guided by moral values in their ITE programmes.

3.4.2 Teaching Critical Thinking

The Foundation for Critical Thinking (2019) claims that although thinking is a natural process, without intervention and structured support, it can often be biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, and potentially prejudiced. Their assertion highlights the need for educators to be cognisant in their teaching approaches to cultivating good thinking habits in their learners. Furthermore, Stupple et al. (2017, p.92) claim that “many students struggle to understand critical thinking, lack confidence in its application, are unsure how they can develop critical thinking skills and struggle to demonstrate them in their assessments”. It is, therefore, crucial to be cognisant of the particular needs of each group when choosing a teaching approach. Additionally, although many educators believe critical thinking to be an essential element of education, they often feel unequipped to teach critical thinking (Sezer, 2008). Consequently, critical thinking instruction within ITE has a dual purpose; it must enable its students to develop critical thinking skills and also model how to pass the skills on and foster them in their future pupils.

Being mindful of learners’ and groups’ individual needs is also promoted by Siegel (1985), who advocates strongly for the consideration of respect as the cornerstone of teaching in a critical manner. Siegel (1985) maintains that our moral obligation to treat others with respect is the driving force behind including critical thinking in our teaching. He (ibid, p.71) asserts that to recognise our learner’s moral worth and treat them with respect means to “recognise student’s right to question, to challenge, and to demand reasons and justifications for what is being taught”, failing to do so denies a learner’s right to independent judgement and evaluation, the tenets of critical thinking for Siegel (1985). Due to their prior educational experiences, students often come to higher education either presuming that they will not be required to think and question or dreading thinking (Burns et al., 2018; O’Leary and Scully, 2018). Therefore, the teaching of critical thinking must be approached slowly; learners must first relearn to embrace the joy and power of thinking itself (Paul and Elder, 1997).

Multiple meta-analyses of empirical studies have indicated that critical thinking is a skill that can be taught to all groups. However, there was considerable variance in the success of different approaches to critical thinking instruction across different groups (Facione, 1990; Paul and Elder, 1997; Abrami et al., 2008; Willingham, 2008; Abrami et al., 2015; Bensley

et al., 2016). Smith et al. (2018) encourage educators to explore a variety of different styles of critical thinking instruction within their own settings to find the most appropriate one.

In considering appropriate approaches to teaching critical thinking, many authors draw on Ennis (1989) who categorised four different approaches namely: general, immersion, infusion, and mixed. The distinction between these four approaches relates to the extent to which critical thinking instruction is explicit and the relationship between critical thinking instruction and course content. The general approach to teaching critical thinking as defined by Ennis (1989, p.4) includes “attempts to teach critical thinking abilities and dispositions separately from the presentation of the content of existing subject-matter offerings, with the purpose of teaching critical thinking”. This approach to critical thinking instruction aims to teach learners to think critically both inside and outside of school through an explicit focus on the development of critical thinking skills (Ennis, 1989). This approach does not rely on learner’s content knowledge in any specific area, and often includes abstract logic problems (Bensley and Spero, 2014).

In contrast, the immersion approach is subject matter driven and involves learners getting “deeply immersed in the subject, but in which general critical thinking principles are not made explicit” (Ennis, 1989, p.5). This approach relies on learners picking up critical thinking skills through “intense, thoughtful exposure or immersion to critical thinking in subject matter” (Bensley and Spero, 2014, p.56). Therefore, this approach relies heavily on the modelling of criticality in their presentation of content and students acquiring the implicit skills and dispositions being promoted. Indeed, Rahimi and Sajed (2014) stated that educators must themselves be practitioners of critical thinking in their teaching practice in order to empower their learners to be critical thinkers themselves. Similarly, hooks (2010, p.10) advocates for educators to adopt “radical openness” and to become comfortable with not always being right. In modelling this openness to new and evolving ideas, learners can learn to value the multiplicity of opinions and develop this aspect of critical thinking (hooks, 2010).

Thirdly, the infusion approach is also subject matter driven and includes a thoughtful approach to subject matter instruction which leads to deep understanding (Ennis, 1989, p.5). However, this approach also involves encouraging learners to think critically about the subject matter they are exploring through an explicit focus on the principles of critical

thinking dispositions and skills (Ennis, 1989). This approach involves the intertwining of subject matter and explicit critical thinking instruction to support learners to knowingly apply critical thinking dispositions to the subject matter they are familiar with (Bensley and Spero, 2014). Bensley and Spero (2014) found this method effective in facilitating the acquisitions of critical thinking skills such as argument analysis, critical reading skills, and self-reflection through a joint focus on modelling of thinking in practice and time for practice alongside feedback.

Finally, the mixed approach involves a combination of the general approach with either the infusion or immersion approaches. Instruction includes a separate thread exclusively concerned with teaching critical thinking dispositions and skills alongside subject-specific instruction (Ennis, 1989). This approach was adopted by Smith et al. (2018) and found to be effective in supporting educators who had limited experience in teaching critical thinking. In separating the teaching of critical thinking skills from subject-specific instruction, this model does not rely as heavily on modelling critical thinking in relation to the subject matter as it is explored in the same way that the immersion and infusion models do. In this way, it may provide a model to support educators beginning their journey to teach critical thinking. Williams (2005) maintains that within ITE critical thinking instruction should be explicit rather than emerging as a by-product of teaching subject matter, as with Ennis' (1989) immersion approach. He (ibid) maintains that this works best when included within the framework of course content, making instruction applicable to students learning, which mirrors Ennis' (1989) infusion approach.

Furthermore, Abrami et al. (2015), through a meta-analysis of research studies, identify two types of instructional interventions that were found to support the development of critical thinking skills. Both interventions could be used across all four teaching approaches developed by Ennis (1989). Firstly, providing opportunities for dialogue and discussion emerged as crucial in improving the development of critical thinking skills (Abrami et al., 2015). Discussion was found to be particularly successful when led by the teacher in a combination of whole-class and small-group settings guided by teacher-posed questions (Abrami et al., 2015). Discussion and engagement with questioning is also advocated for specifically within critical thinking instruction in ITE (Williams, 2005; Piro and Anderson, 2015; Maphalala and Mpofu, 2017; Taşkaya and Çavuşoğlu, 2017). Unless

future classroom teachers become adept at engaging in discussion and question stereotypes themselves, they will be unable to model these skills for their future pupils. Maphalala and Mpopfu (2017, p.9257) maintain that student teachers should be in a “continuous process of collaborative and cooperative knowledge generation as they go through their curriculum”.

Secondly, ensuring learners are exposed to problems or examples that reflect reality when practicing their critical thinking skills was found to support them in developing high-quality problem-solving skills (Abrami et al., 2015). Abrami et al. (2015) assert that this was particularly effective when employing role-playing methodologies. While opportunities for dialogue and the exposure to authentic problems were found to be effective in combination, the impact for learners was improved when mentorship was also present (Abrami et al., 2015). Although mentorship was not found to be very effective on its own, Abrami et al. (2015) found that in studies where it was applied in conjunction with the other two interventions, it led to improved results. They (ibid) conclude that mentorship may therefore serve as a catalyst for critical thinking in supporting other strategies.

Both interventions stress the importance of teacher involvement in the teaching of critical thinking through mentorship or teacher-posed questioning (Abrami et al., 2015). Conceding that although critical thinking is often manifested as self-directed and disciplined continual questioning, hooks (2010) maintains that it is also necessarily an interactive process that requires participation on the part of both learner and educator. Similarly, Brown (2014, p.11) stresses the importance of the role of the educator in facilitating the development of criticality. However, he (ibid) stresses that it can be challenging to maintain a balance between valuing the multiplicity of opinions in the classroom while simultaneously ensuring an adherence to rationality in assessing value and merit in each perspective. Siegel (1985, p.72) clarifies the role of the educator in ensuring this balance by stating that “by encouraging critical thinking, then, we teach the student what we think is right, but we encourage the student to scrutinize the evidence and judge independently the rightness of our claims”.

Mirroring the assertions of hooks (2010) and Wechsler et al. (2018) in their definitions of critical thinking, Bensley and Spero (2014) stress the importance of viewing critical thinking in education as a multi-dimensional construct. They (ibid) assert that the

importance of focusing on knowledge and skills should be balanced with developing critical thinking dispositions. However, this needs to be done while accounting for individual differences in academic ability and achievement variables that may also be related to critical thinking performance. The teaching of critical thinking must therefore be cognisant of this multi-focus. Research within ITE highlights the importance of being cognisant of lecture sequencing in supporting student acquisition of critical thinking skills (Snyder and Snyder, 2008; Maphalala and Mpofu, 2017). Lecture sequencing involves incorporating the multiple dimensions of critical thinking within lessons by activating students' prior knowledge, building new knowledge through discussion and working to apply and integrate these with students' own experiences (Maphalala and Mpofu, 2017). In this study, I have been cognisant of the research outlined here and worked to implement research-backed strategies and analyse their effectiveness within my own setting.

3.5 Critiques of Critical Thinking

As previously stated, critical thinking has been identified by international organisations such as UNESCO and the OECD and leading research groups such as the Change Leadership Group at Harvard University as one of a set of core skills necessary to respond to the challenges of the 21st century (Ananiadou and Claro, 2009; Wagner, 2009; Luna Scott, 2015). They claim that education holds the potential to support the development of such core future-oriented skills within society. Additionally, Alston (2001, p.27) notes that “the term critical thinking has become embedded in the idioms of pre-service teachers as well as in the curriculum objectives and in the in-service training of educators”. This research examines approaches to GE within ITE and so it is significant to note that within the GE field, critical thinking is often revered as one of the ultimate goals of high quality GE (Tormey, 2003; Andreotti, 2006; Waldron et al., 2012; Liddy, 2013; Bourn, 2015b; Conklin and Hughes, 2016).

Within a field that clearly values criticality and thus the questioning of concepts or orthodoxies presented as definitive, it is essential that critical thinking itself is critiqued. The following section examines multiple perspectives on a concept often presented as universal. As outlined by Torn Halves (2015, no page) “critical thinking regresses when it is framed uncritically as a mere tool”. As well as presenting considered critiques of critical

thinking, I will also offer counterarguments where appropriate. Through personal reflection, review of literature and synthesis of both, I have arrived at four main critiques of critical thinking which will be examined here, namely:

(a) Critical thinking is ambiguous and could therefore be considered to be unteachable;

(b) Critical thinking can devalue other ways of knowing;

(c) Critical thinking is inherently values neutral;

(d) Critical thinking is counterproductive.

3.5.1 Critical Thinking is Ambiguous and could therefore be Considered to be Unteachable

As noted above, critical thinking is not easily defined, and many distinct interpretations exist in different fields (see Atkinson, 1997; Martin, 2015). Atkinson (1997, p.74) is dismissive of academics who, unable to define the term, take the concept of critical thinking on faith as “a sort of self-evident foundation of Western thought”. Additionally, Atkinson (1997, p.72) conceptualises critical thinking as a “non-overt social practice” and expresses doubts as to the feasibility of teaching something which he views as “an organic part of the very culture that holds it up as an admirable achievement” and which he believes is “more at the level of common sense than a rational, transparent, and – especially- teachable set of behaviours”. Viewed from Atkinson’s perspective, critical thinking is a skill learned through socialisation within your community or household which would account for the varying levels of, and commitment to criticality displayed by people from different communities or households. If we are to accept Atkinson’s main argument, then critical thinking is a context-specific practice which is non-transferable across settings.

Defined as a fixed concept expressed solely through verbal or written argument, critical thinking would be a relatively unambiguous teachable skill. However, if we challenge this rigid definition by accepting that intellect can be expressed in other ways such as imaginatively, affectively or somatically then this increases the ambiguity of how to define, teach and measure critical thinking (Alston, 2001). Alston (2001, p.30) promotes

the “opening up of boundaries between thinking/ feeling/ imagining/ acting”. When we expand the ways in which critical thinking can be expressed, expressiveness becomes a central disposition for critical thinking and skills such as empathy and the ability to imagine alternative futures become central dispositions of an active critical thinker (Alston, 2001). Conceptualised in this way, critical thinking holds the potential to have a transformative impact. However, the challenge of teaching and measuring such an ambiguous concept is heightened when critical thinking is considered in this way rather than the rigid fixed nature it is sometimes presented as having.

Willingham (2008) defines a key problem with teaching critical thinking when it is framed as a skill which can be learned and applied across any situation. He (ibid) argues that thinking is intertwined with the need for content knowledge, and thus not easily transferable. As outlined previously, McPeck and Lipman are both advocates of subject-specific critical thinking skills. In acknowledging their arguments, Ennis (1989) recognises that an instinctive transfer of critical thinking dispositions and abilities from one setting to another is unlikely. He (ibid) maintains that transfer only becomes likely if learners are given the opportunity to practice their skills in a variety of settings and if their teaching has an explicit focus on the transfer of skills and the connections between various domains. In order to foster the continued ability to transfer critical thinking skills across domains it is essential therefore that learners are given the opportunity to engage with content knowledge within multiple domains and are encouraged to make explicit links between topics for themselves.

In the argument that calls for a stronger focus on content knowledge transfer, what is forgotten is that in education our aim is to prepare learners for the ‘real world’ which is constantly changing and the future of which can only be unknown to us. Ultimately, we are preparing learners for the unknown as we cannot know how global society will truly be affected by climate change, how increased migration and secularism will transform our societies, how technology will influence people and so the best we can hope to do is equip learners with the skills to survive and thrive in a constantly changing and evolving world (Luna Scott, 2015). Critical thinking is a skill which holds the potential to teach people to apply their knowledge by developing and forming opinions in order to identify solutions to

problems. Wagner (2009) of Harvard University has identified critical thinking as the top skill needed to survive in a futures-oriented education.

As with many areas of life and education, the ideal is to strive for a balance. Freire (1970, p.46) believes that “the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world”. Consequently, education for critical thinking needs to be attentive to the tensions between the transfer of subject specific knowledge and time for developing criticality. Furthermore, Brown (2014) promotes “fair-minded critical thinking” to counter possible indoctrination within educational practices which present and favour only the viewpoints of the educators. This approach to critical thinking addresses the tension that exists between allowing learners the freedom to explore and express their own ideas and ensuring that rationality still prevails (Brown, 2014).

3.5.2 Critical Thinking Can Devalue Other Ways of Knowing

The isolated promotion of critical thinking may be viewed as the devaluation of other ways of knowing. Through a review of various definitions, Martin (2015) established that the common thread of peoples’ interpretation of critical thinking was that it involves objectivity and the application of reason with a focus on data and evidence similar to the scientific method. As a logic-based thought process, it could be viewed as a ‘hard’ approach to knowledge which does not consider ‘soft’ ways of knowing the world such as intuition, instinct, experience and feelings, also referred to as an ‘embodied way of knowing’ (Barbour, 2016). These ‘soft’ ways of knowing have served humanity for generations. Phenomenologist, Merleau-Ponty (1964) argued that these forms of knowing through embodiment and not simply relying on the mind are key in understanding and experiencing the world. Furthermore, Palmer (1987) maintains that the hard approaches to knowledge such as criticality and our ability to engage in dialogue and debate are necessarily dependent on soft virtues. He (ibid) equates soft virtues with community and asserts that without community we are left with competitive individualism which only encourages silence and squashes interaction.

Additionally, Vaidya (2017) defines the ‘meta-critical question about critical thinking’ and asks us to consider whether critical thinking, as it is generally understood, is insensitive to

race, class, gender and non-western traditions. Vaidya (2017) uses the example of the Nyāya School of classical Indian philosophy concerning the nature of argumentation to show how non-western traditions can enhance our understanding of critical thinking. Using an example from Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, Vaidya (2017) explains how meditation is used as a tool of critical thinking that focuses on supporting the development of critical self-understanding. Vaidya (2017) similarly highlights comparisons that could equally be made between western critical thinking and Africana, Arabic, Jaina, and Jewish philosophy.

Drawing on her knowledge of multiple perspectives on knowledge from traditions around the world, Linker (2015) asserts that western philosophy and conceptualisations of critical thinking often contrast reason with emotion despite that fact that the duality of reason and emotion can be aligned with other dualities such as mind and body or good and evil that are deeply embedded in our collective conceptual history. The positioning of emotion as diametrically opposite of reason has enabled the justification of oppression across history (Linker, 2015). Historically people of colour and women were often presented as hysterical or dangerously angry in order to rationalise their subjugation (Linker, 2015).

Similarly, Galotti et al. (1999) establish critical thinking as a form of separate knowing which involves being objective, analytical and detached. They (ibid, p.747) claim that “separate knowers attempt to rigorously exclude their own feelings and beliefs when evaluating a proposal or idea”. The diametrical opposite of this form of knowing is connected knowing, which embraces empathy and connection and involves the knower attempting to understand an issue from another person’s point of view rather than simply evaluating their thoughts and opinions as a separate knower would (Galotti et al., 1999). In this way, connected knowing is similar to embodied knowing (Barbour, 2016). Studies by Perry (1970) and Belenky et al. (1986) (both cited in Galotti et al. 1999) revealed that a significantly higher proportion of female participants displayed stances in relation to connected knowing whereas male participants were much more strongly aligned with separate knowing. This affirms Linkers (2015) assertions which highlight that forms of knowledge considered feminine or soft have historically and consistently been devalued in society.

Critiques which emphasise a divide between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ forms of knowing, as seen in separate knowing versus connected knowing or logical analysis versus embodied knowing, can be situated within the broader discourse of patriarchy and the differing values placed on masculine and feminine traits. Twenge (2009) describes the increasing trend in Western cultures which has seen women gain more status politically, socially and economically, while traditionally feminine traits have been increasingly devalued. They (ibid) highlight the danger of this trend towards masculine traits for all genders as it restricts our ability to learn, experience and act in the world.

In a similar vein, Alston (2001, p.36) outlines the way in which we generate our opinions outlining that “opinions are not the product of disembodied understanding. Neither are they produced outside of rational processes. Instead opinion is the rational response to undergoing conscious and unconscious experience”. Alston (2001, p.36) situates opinion as “both a form of knowing and as a result of situatedness”. It could be argued that an overemphasis on logic as a way of knowing could limit our ability to understand and experience the world. Finding balance between Western hard approaches to critical thinking with alternative experiential softer forms of knowledge could be the key to equipping people with the skills to impact on their surroundings in a meaningful way.

The approach to critical thinking promoted by many critical pedagogues is deliberately attentive to framings such as culture and gender and promotes their inclusion in our conceptualisations of critical thinking. hooks (2010) details how the inclusion of gender and racial framings in education enabled the interrogation of biases which ultimately led to desegregation movements.

3.5.3 Critical Thinking is Inherently Values-Neutral

Noddings and Brooks (2017, p.32) remind us that critical thinking is not inherently “a moral good”. Furthermore, Martin (2015, p.251) defines the Western tradition of critical thinking as having an emphasis on “data, evidence and information”. The danger with this model of critical thinking is that it could be perceived as a-moral as there is no requirement for critical thinking to contribute to the greater good of society if it is solely concerned with data and evidence and does not have an inherent moral component. This mirrors

Linskens (2010) concern in relation to an over-reliance on critical thinking, which they characterise as devoid of any set value system.

Critical thinking is characterised by the desire to question concepts, theories and knowledge and the commitment to examining multiple viewpoints when learning (Paul and Elder, 2016). The critical thinker is then expected to decide on their values and opinions or the right or wrong solution to a situation based on their critical approach to it (Bok, 2006; Dwyer et al., 2014). The potential danger in the promotion of critical thinking in isolation from values-based literacy is that the critical thinker is open to deciding on a racist, sexist or homophobic view of the world as their concept of what is right. Contrastingly, Hayes (2014) argues that critical thinking is often a misrepresentation of indoctrination. In opposition to the concern that a focus on critical thinking is values neutral, he (ibid) believes that courses claiming to teach critical thinking are often used as a means for promoting political aims and indoctrinating students into the 'correct ideas'. This belief is mirrored by Alston (2001) and Zelnick (2008) who both reported that they experienced indoctrination masked as critical thinking in third level courses which presented only one side of a debate.

Copp (2016) presents indoctrination as diametrically opposed to education and outlines the varying ways in which controversial issues are included in the classroom. Controversial issues have been defined as "issues which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and society" (CoE, 2015, p.8). These can include issues that stand up to scientific rigour such as climate change and evolution alongside human-constructed ideals such as human rights. Copp (2016) argues that certain controversial issues, such as evolution, which are well supported and widely accepted by people who have honestly and thoroughly reviewed the evidence in the area, are not indoctrinatory to teach. Accepting Copp's theory would therefore mean that there are certain concepts which could ethically be promoted alongside the development of critical thinking without being indoctrinatory or being said to deny people the opportunity to develop their own beliefs and values. The key, according to Copp (2016) is to ensure the controversy surrounding the theories are also presented.

Zelnick (2008) claims that people often mask hostility towards institutions or culture as critical thinking. He (ibid) cited a course in his university which aimed to promote critical

thinking, but which used texts which presented only one perspective. In his argument, Zelnick (2008) warns against the promotion of any one value-system without a balanced look at both sides which he claims can perpetuate indoctrination and rote learning while misleading learners into believing they are thinking critically or creatively because they believe themselves to be well informed despite being versed only in one side of a debate.

Within the field of GE critical thinking does not exist in isolation but instead is fostered alongside the development of empathy and the promotion of values seen as universally good such as equity, human rights, and social justice (Bourn, 2020a). This combination of values-based learning and critical thinking is evidenced in McCloskey's (2017, p.165) claim that "development education is not a neutral process but rather, it consciously and consistently sides with those who are marginalised and disempowered". This educational field is therefore never values-neutral but combines classical critical thinking with the promotion of specific values, although this approach is not standard across all fields.

Moore (2013) highlights the divergent views on criticality as it links to values and ethics. Participants in his study varied in their opinions, some believed that values and taking a moral stance were implicit in the idea of being critical, whereas other participants believed that taking a values-based stance was incompatible with the notion of being critical. Despite the assertion that critical thinking is not in itself predicated on a particular set of morals or beliefs, Freirean theory holds that education which promotes critical thinking has a role to play in liberating people from oppression and bringing about social transformation (Freire, 1974). Similarly, many models of education which have social change within their set of core aims are predicated on the principals of critical thinking. In consultation with key stakeholders such as educators, NGOs, and learners, Children in Crossfire (2017) identified that the development of critical thinking alongside emotional development was key for learners to be able to take part in society and to apply their knowledge to bring about global justice. It is crucial therefore to ensure that a balance is struck between exposing learners to a wide range of contradictory viewpoints and potentially establishing discriminatory viewpoints and indoctrination into a set of "correct" viewpoints or values, which may deny them the opportunity to develop their criticality.

Therefore, it is clear that although critical thinking in and of itself can be said to be values-neutral, it is the values of the setting in which it is being promoted which will determine

how it is approached. While critical thinking can be falsely used as a cover for biased instruction, focused on only one perspective, true critical thinking must account for a multiplicity of viewpoints while adhering to rationality (Gallant, 2008; hooks, 2010). Pollard (2018) promotes an approach to critical thinking that would have us embrace discomfort. He (ibid) argues that having a belief in fundamental values does not necessitate that everyone share the same political views. This approach to critical thinking in education requires educators and learners to be prepared and willing to listen to viewpoints which they may find uncomfortable, but which can still be considered rational and coherent.

3.5.4 Critical thinking is Counterproductive

Critical thinking is intrinsically linked with problem solving; both are presented side by side in much of the discourse around 21st Century skills (Ananiadou and Claro, 2009; Luna Scott, 2015). An overemphasis on criticality, however, can serve to alienate people and sabotage attempts to problem-solve and could be considered to be counterproductive in a society looking for solutions. Only focusing on critiquing and finding holes in an issue or problem does not necessarily help to generate solutions and can slow down change and action. Roth (2010) argues that focusing entirely on critiquing a topic and being solely negative deprives learners of the opportunity to learn from what they are studying and to find and generate meaningful solutions based on information garnered from experience along with content knowledge.

Equally, Roth (2010) asserts that although many people may be skilled critical thinkers, this can often serve to hurt or damage others and isolate people. Indeed, Zelnick (2008) argues that critical thinking often manifests itself as hostility towards institutions and culture. If critical thinking presents itself as harsh or focuses on points scoring, it has the potential to alienate others rather than encouraging them to think and consider their own perspective while learning as much as possible. A harsh or apparently judgmental critical thinker can therefore discourage others from becoming critical thinkers and instead incentivise them to adopt an apathetic approach.

Becoming a critical thinker requires you to be familiar with content knowledge. Standish (2012) argues that a focus on the elements of global learning, such as critical thinking, has

led to a reduction in content knowledge. In fact, the reduction of knowledge transfer is counter-intuitive to the goals of critical thinking, as subject-specific knowledge is essential for thinking within a given domain, as the more a person knows, the more critical they have the potential to be. However, people can also tend towards apathy as a result of over-exposure to difficult or harsh realities. Once you are exposed to the reality and scale of the global issues facing humanity today it is easy to shy away from such issues and wish to bury your head in the sand (Shah and Brown, 2010).

Consequently, the fostering of critical thinking must be accompanied by compassionate support for those being exposed to the harsh realities of inequality and oppression. Boler's (1999, p.176) *Pedagogy of Discomfort* encourages us to begin to become comfortable in our discomfort and to "invite the other, with compassion and fortitude, to learn to see things differently, no matter how perilous the course for all involved". Significantly, Murphy et al. (2014, p.52) maintain that "both emotional skills and critical thinking skills are mutually essential, and in fact it is only by cultivating a symbiosis between these, can pedagogy be developed that presents a true transformational agency to people".

Many participants in Moore's (2013, p.513) study mirrored a concern that a focus on critical thinking can often hamper the production of new ideas or the generation of solutions. While supportive of and actively promoting critical thinking in their practices, the academics who participated in the study cited concerns that often a focus on critical thinking can result in people tending to focus predominantly on critiquing ideas, poking holes or being 'excessively negative' (ibid). They maintained a need instead for teaching to support learners to make connections between different ideas, concepts and sources explored rather than encouraging them to solely focus on evaluating and critiquing ideas or texts (ibid).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored key considerations in relation to critical thinking. Chiefly, it synthesised a variety of definitions of critical thinking and explored its associated skills, including analysis, evaluation, and inference. Due to the nature of this study, this chapter also focused on critical thinking within education and presented research-informed approaches to teaching critical thinking. Finally, common critiques of critical thinking

were outlined to ensure a balanced approach to the topic. Cognisant of the critiques of, and challenges for critical thinking outlined in this chapter, Chapter Four proposes the core disposition, key skills and considerations integral to the teaching of critical global learning within ITE.

4 Identifying Approaches for Teaching Critical Global Learning

4.1 Introduction

In Chapters Two and Three I shared the relevant literature in relation to both GE and critical thinking. Both chapters highlighted the ways in which these two fields are interconnected while also outlining some of the critiques and challenges they each face. Drawing on the synergies between GE and critical thinking, and conscious of the challenges they each face, I identified the key skills and considerations for teaching critical global learning which I will present in this chapter. These were then used to guide my teaching and the data collection in this research project.

In drawing together the fields of critical thinking and GE with considerations for how to approach the teaching of them in ITE, I chose to use the term critical global learning which I define as:

a reflective educational process founded on the values of global justice, equity and human rights. It focuses on engaging in understanding and questioning the dominant systems and structures which create and perpetuate multiple forms of inequality globally. It encourages us to consider how our lives interact with the questions being explored and fosters an interest in acting to address inequality. It is a learning process which recognises different ways of understanding the world and consequently draws on multiple perspectives to inform the learning process.

From this point forward in the thesis, I will move from the term global education to global learning to highlight that I am referring to an educational approach rather than the educational field of GE as outlined in Chapter Two. As outlined by Bourn (2020b) the term 'learning' implies a focus on process, pedagogy and engagement. Furthermore, the use of critical to prefix global learning is used to highlight the emphasis placed on critical thinking in my research, while also responding to Andreotti's (2006) call to move towards more critical forms of GCE.

4.2 Developing a Model

In working to identify the key skills that students should develop through engagement with critical global learning, and the core considerations for my teaching, I developed a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, presented in its final format in Chapter Nine. The Model was developed over a five-year period while undertaking this thesis and was adapted multiple times as my understanding grew and evolved. At all times, I aimed to ensure this model responded to the critiques of and challenges faced by both critical thinking and GE by aiming to mitigate against them where possible.

The primary purpose of developing the model was to guide and inform my teaching. I identified a set of skills against which I could evaluate the success of my teaching. Through reviewing literature, engaging in professional critical conversations with colleagues, and reflecting on my work with my students, I identified four key skills with a set of sub-skills within them. Visualisations of the different stages the model underwent can be found in Appendix A. The starting point for the model was a publication by Shah and Brown (2010), which detailed six considerations for including critical thinking within the context of global learning. I expanded on their considerations to develop a set of nine skills that presented the desired outcomes for critical global learners. Finally, these were rearranged into four key skills with several sub-skills. This skillset informed my data collection and teaching focus when working with students over three action research cycles.

The skillset I identified and employed in my teaching, data collection and analysis in this thesis represented a framework, or an organised collection of ideas. However, in response to my experience of using the framework of skills in my teaching, I began to consider my classroom as a system not only focused on outcomes, but also dependent on the factors which impact students acquisition of the skills I had identified. As evidenced in Appendix A, I initially used the metaphor of a garden to consider the system of interrelated and interdependent elements. When reflecting the skills in the context of a system, I introduced factors that impact how students develop the framework of skills I was working with. While I originally visualised these considerations separately from the skillset, through the process of moving from a framework of skills to a model to support the holistic

implementation of critical global learning, they became an integrated entity. In this way, the model moves beyond the initial framework I used as an organisational tool to guide my planning, to a structure that is considerate of the holistic experience of teaching and open system within the classroom. The final model provides a conceptualisation of the complete process of teaching critical global learning that goes beyond just the desired outcomes for students and is considerate of the varied factors which impact students learning.

The final structure and organisation of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* came together following data collection and analysis and responds to the findings of this thesis. It will be outlined in detail in Chapter Nine. However, in this chapter, I will share the foundations of the model by identifying the core disposition, skills and key considerations that guided my teaching and data collection throughout this dissertation.

4.2.1 Responding to the Purposes of Education

Throughout the process of developing the final *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, I was conscious of ensuring that the final model would be considerate of the purpose of education. Although a subjective topic, Spiel et al. (2018) identified four distinct but interrelated purposes of education found across different contexts. They are humanistic, civic, economic, and furthering social equity and justice. These purposes can be seen reflected in the work of Freire and Dewey, who both present the purpose of education as broader than the impact it can have for individuals and stress the importance of education contributing to social progress. Freire (1974, 1970) proposes emancipation as the purpose of education. While Dewey (1902, 1899, 1897) claims that education should prepare learners for life in society, supporting them to reach their full potential and be equipped to respond to challenges they encounter as citizens. Their assertions connect to the humanistic, civic, and equity purposes of education offered by Spiel et al. (2018).

While Spiel et al. (2018) maintain that education should focus equally on all four purposes, the reality is that there is often an overemphasis on economic productivity and growth as the goal of education (Burke, 2011; Liddy and Parker-Jenkins, 2013; Ball, 2016; Spiel et al., 2018). Education focused on economic productivity is reflected in a neoliberal move towards increased assessment and high-stakes accountability for schools (Ball, 2016). This focus can sometimes come at the expense of the other educational goals. With an

awareness of this imbalance, this model is aligned with the humanistic, civic and equity purposes of education.

Humanistic education aims to “infuse students with values, knowledge and the abilities required to flourish as human beings and participate fully in their society” (Spiel et al., 2018, p.17). In addition, education with a humanistic focus also honours learners’ individuality and provides opportunities that support identity formation (Spiel et al., 2018, p.17). This goal is reflected in the aims of education presented in the Irish National Curriculum, which include “to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual” (NCCA, 1999, p.7).

The Irish Curriculum also focuses on the importance of civic education, stating that education should “enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others and so contribute to the good of society” (NCCA, 1999, p.7). Civic education acknowledges the long-term impact of education on individuals and recognises the potential roles learners can play when they are active members of society. Through civic education, learners are expected to be informed, responsible, engaged citizens who have the necessary skills to understand and participate in creating, maintaining and improving societies (Spiel et al., 2018).

Finally, education can be looked upon to contribute to social equity and justice in societies as it is often used as a tool for social mobility by individuals, families, or groups of people accessing education as a support in breaking barriers of social, ethnic, cultural exclusion and fragmentation (Spiel et al., 2018). The Irish *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* places significant importance on the role of higher education in contributing to society by developing and applying research led responses to social, economic and civic challenges (DoE, 2011).

The skillset outlined in this chapter is oriented towards humanistic goals of education through a focus on developing knowledge and values while honouring student’s individuality. Additionally, the skills align with civic aims due to their focus on supporting students to become critical and informed citizens. Although not focused on actively contributing to social equity and justice, the underlying values which underpin the skills

ensure that a focus on justice and equity are retained and a commitment to those values fostered.

4.3 Skills and Dispositions

As outlined in Chapter One, I was motivated to identify not just observable skills but also the less observable dispositions which underpin students acquisition of critical global learning skills. While students may develop some of the skills associated with critical thinking through participation in higher education, their focus in developing these skills is often linked to performance in assessments rather than personal growth. It is my contention that without a personal commitment to criticality it is less likely that students would continue to practice their criticality skills outside of the classroom in their personal and professional lives. Consequently, I identified a commitment to criticality as the core disposition necessary for students to become critical global learners. Other important dispositions in relation to values and attitudes are threaded throughout the skills outlined below.

The contention that the development and implementation of critical thinking skills is inseparably linked to a commitment to criticality is supported by critical thinking theorists. Paul and Elder (1997) posit a staged progression of critical thinking development through which learners must pass as their critical thinking skills develop. In their proposition of a staged development of critical thinking, Paul and Elder (1997, p.34) also propose that “passage from one stage to the next is dependent upon a necessary level of commitment on the part of an individual to develop as a critical thinker, is not automatic, and is unlikely to take place subconsciously”. Their proposition highlights the role that learner autonomy plays in developing critical thinking skills. While educators can explicitly teach the skills and promote criticality, taking Paul and Elder’s position, learner interest and commitment levels are the determining factor in their progression to an independent critical thinker. Furthermore, the classic and much cited definition of critical thinking offered by Glaser (1941) maintains that to engage in criticality “calls for persistent effort”. His definition of critical thinking firstly lists “an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one’s experience” (Glaser, 1941,

p.5). Accordingly, it is not sufficient to just develop the relevant skillset, but it is important to also be disposed to using the skills of critical thinking and putting them into practice.

4.3.1 Critical Global Learning Skills

In the following sections I outline the four core critical global learning skills I identified and which guided my research: (1) develop and use a global learning knowledge base; (2) question orthodoxies; (3) engage in self-reflection; and (4) use a values lens. As will be evident, many of the skills and dispositions have overlapping and interconnected foci and draw on similar conceptualisations and challenges presented by the fields of GE and critical thinking.

4.3.1.1 Skill 1: Develop and Use a Global Learning Knowledge Base

The first skill is to develop and use a global learning knowledge base. Bailin et al. (1999, p.290) assert that the quality of critical thinking a person can engage in is dependent upon what they know about the topic being explored. Fundamentally, without sufficient content knowledge, it is not possible to engage in authentic critical thinking about a topic. As outlined by Bailin et al. (1999, p.290) “critical thinking always takes place in the context of (and against the backdrop of) already existing concepts, beliefs, values, and ways of acting”. Subsequently, as our thinking is a product of our knowledge and experiences, insufficient knowledge in an area limits a person’s ability to critically explore the topic.

Furthermore, as emphasised in Chapter Three, one of the critiques of critical thinking is that it could become counterproductive if overly focused on critique, which can manifest as hostility towards institutions and culture (Zelnick, 2008). In responding to this potentially problematic direction of critical thinking, Roth (2010) promotes a focus on developing and extending learners’ content knowledge to better support the generation of meaningful solutions to global challenges. Focusing on knowledge development is responsive to the legitimate concerns raised by Standish (2012) who has voiced apprehension about a focus on global learning resulting in a reduction in learners’ content knowledge. Standish (2012) encourages educators to focus on topics in isolation to allow for them to be explored in greater depth.

Knowledge development is not only crucial in addressing potential downfalls of critical thinking but is emphasised as a core element in many definitions of GE and its constituent educational approaches. Tormey's (2003) definition of DE includes education about development which mirrors the Irish Aid (2017, p.6) definition which promotes increasing awareness and understanding of the "rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live". This focus on knowledge development is further reflected in definitions of HRE (Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2011; Struthers, 2015), EfS (Taylor et al., 2015), Peace Education (Harris and Howlett, 2013), ICE (NCCA, 2005), and GCE (Oxfam, 2015; UNESCO, 2015).

In the process of developing and using a knowledge base, there are additional sub-skills which support developing this skill. These include coming to know that knowledge is fluid and contested, understanding power relationships within an international development context, and making connections within learning.

4.3.1.1.1 Come to know that Knowledge is Fluid and Contested

The fields of GE and critical thinking are both defined by their shared curiosity and commitment to unravelling the varied array of perspectives and experiences on a topic. As a result of focusing on the contested nature of information, students should come to understand that knowledge is not a fixed state but needs constant evaluation as they engage with new perspectives and experiences.

As outlined in Chapter Two, GE is concerned with controversial and contested topics which do not have simple or universal explanations (Andreotti, 2006; Shah and Brown, 2010; Hunt, 2012). Hunt (2012) tasks learners with embracing this ambiguity and becoming comfortable with a multiplicity of viewpoints as a means of challenging stereotypes. Additionally, a cornerstone of critical thinking is the ability to reflect on and question knowledge. A key outcome for critical thinkers is the ability to form personal understandings of contested concepts (Ennis, 1989; Dwyer et al., 2014). Critical thinkers should be able to move and shift their understandings in response to new experiences or evolving knowledge (hooks, 2010; Luna Scott, 2015). Shah and Brown (2010) contend that learners should have the opportunity to engage in debates to enable them to evaluate for themselves the relative merits of contested opinions.

The framework used by Andreotti and de Souza in their ‘Other Eyes’ project implores the learner to engage in ‘learning to unlearn’ as they acknowledge that each person’s perspective on what is considered ‘good’ is related to where they come from socially, historically and culturally and that there are multiple perspectives to be considered (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008b, p.29). They (ibid, p.29) further propose a focus on learning to learn, during which time learners “learn to receive new perspectives, to re-arrange and expand [their] own and to deepen [their] understanding”. The focus lies in supporting the learner to acknowledge the limitations of their experiences and perspectives and recognise the multiplicity of valid viewpoints in relation to different GE topics. Furthermore, mirroring similar contentions proposed by hooks (2010), Andreotti and deSouza (2008b) propose that the purpose in reflecting on contested topics is not to produce or replicate identical opinions. Rather, they promote exposure to difference and becoming comfortable with the discomfort of topics not easily defined, as advocated for by Hunt (2012), Boler (2009) and Keating (2007). This is not necessarily an easy process in the classroom where many conflicting perspectives may co-exist in relation to any given topic. However, hooks (2010) promotes the development of an engaged classroom which provides opportunities for dissenting opinions to be aired, discussed and responded to with respect.

4.3.1.1.2 Understand Power Structures within an International Development Context

GE is concerned with learning about the world and how it works socially and politically, and critical thinking is focused on enabling people to listen to multiple viewpoints, ask pertinent questions and analyse their beliefs and ideas. Just as GE topics are complex and contested, so too are they political. Shah and Brown (2010, p.38) contend that all education is political as everything has “an ideological and political underpinning and is shaped by patterns of power distribution”. Furthermore, they (ibid) promote viewing the world through a political lens which can support the evolution of a charitable view of other countries towards a critical examination of the structures that shape and influence global challenges and our knowledge of them. Consequently, awareness of power structures which influence inequality has been identified as core knowledge necessary for critical global learners to develop their awareness of the world. Gallant (2008) posits that it is in

coming to understand power structures and their influence in the world that we can begin to resist and challenge them.

Some authors link power inextricably with discourse (Youdell, 2006; Gallant, 2008). Youdell (2006, p.35) highlights that by accepting that power structures are both a product and effect of dominant discourses we can better understand how this makes some practices likely and others all but impossible given societies collective beliefs of how power is wielded and by whom. Furthermore, Gallant (2008, p.246) maintains that by acknowledging that power is established and advanced through dominant discourses we must also accept that it can therefore be changed through “identifying, analysing and redefining the discourses”. Hence, society and individuals have significant power in reshaping power differentials, and the role of critical questioning in coming to understand and deconstruct systems which create and perpetuate these differentials is crucial in addressing inequality.

4.3.1.1.3 Make Connections within Learning

Hicks (2008) highlights the spatial and temporal dimensions of education (Figure 4). He (ibid) posits that learners must learn about both the temporal interrelationships between the past, present and future and also the spatial interrelationships between the local, national and global.

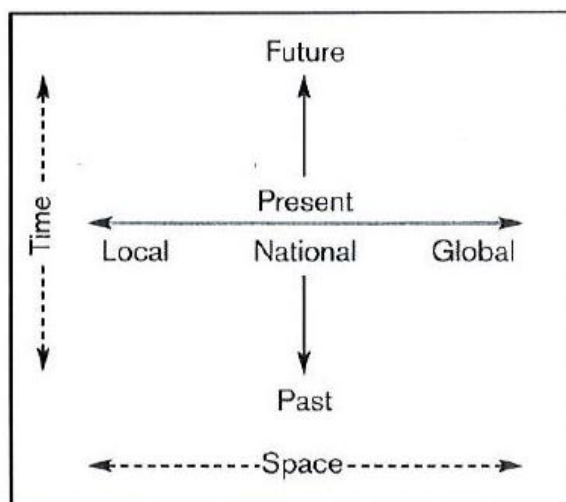


Figure 4: The Spatial and Temporal Dimensions of Development Education, Hicks (2008)

These spatial and temporal interrelationships are echoed in many definitions of GE and each of its constituent educational approaches as seen in Chapter Two. Hicks (2008, p.116) recommends that learners explore the intergenerational links between past, present and future to support the development of a sense of continuity and change and ultimately a responsibility for the future. Making connections within the temporal dimension is also advocated for strongly as a key element of critical thinking by Alston (2001, p.38) who maintains that “critical thinkers are seeking to make connections between what has been known, what is happening now, and what could be”. Additionally, making temporal connections allows individuals to develop appropriate interventions at a variety of levels, thus highlighting the spatial connections and influence we can have as individuals within our communities and the wider world (Alston, 2001).

The importance of focusing on interconnections to enact change is echoed by Hunt (2012) who maintains that in connecting local and global issues, GE advocates for sustainable and thoughtful action to generate change. Furthermore, Tye (1990, quoted in Bourn, 2020, p.13) affirms that GE is concerned with “those problems and issues that cut across national boundaries, about interconnectedness and recognising the importance of looking at issues through the eyes and minds of others”.

In advocating for a focus on interconnections within GE to support criticality, Shah and Brown (2010) maintain that the interconnections between the parts in any given system are more important than the individual parts. Therefore, they (ibid) posit that it is not sufficient to only understand a system’s constituent parts, but that we must focus on the way in which they interact. They (ibid) give the example of climate change and the ways in which we must think inter-systematically in order to understand the causes, effects, and most effective mitigation and adaptation strategies.

4.3.1.2 Skill 2: Question Orthodoxies

The second core skill involves questioning orthodoxies. Orthodoxies, by definition, are pervasive in society and allow people to accept a current status-quo as inevitable, leading people to believe that the way things are is the way they have always been. The pervasive

stories that people tell about cultural, social, and political issues shape our society. Keating (2007) cautions us to be mindful of these stories as they can become self-fulfilling, if we come to accept the way things are as unavoidable, it is easy to believe change is impossible or ill-advised. She (ibid) uses the phrase ‘status-quo stories’ to highlight the potentially damaging impact of unquestioningly accepting orthodoxies as this can serve to normalise current harmful social and political conditions and hinder the possibility of change. Not only does the acceptance of status-quo stories hinder change, but Keating (2007 p.23) maintains that they “seduce us into resisting change”. Adichie (2009, no page), in her TED talk ‘*The danger of a single story*’, demonstrates through her own life experiences that we are “impressionable and vulnerable in the face of a story”. Additionally, Keating (2007, p.122) proclaims that we are all born into “a reality filled with customs, stories, and myths that have already been recirculated countless times”. Both Adichie and Keating’s assertions establish that from a young age we are inculcated in stories and both subtly and explicitly taught the orthodoxies which we come to consider as the truth about the world.

In encouraging us to become aware of our place within society, and consequent responsibilities, Andreotti (2006) implores us to acknowledge that we are all part of the problem and part of the solution. She (ibid) encourages us to acknowledge that there are structures that benefit our lives, while simultaneously actively disempowering or harming others, and as a result, we are implicated in them. Keating (2007, p.123) acknowledges the ways in which we are responsible for orthodoxies which perpetuate oppression and declares that we must “investigate and transform the ‘white’-supremacist masculinist framework that sustains status-quo stories’ power”.

While questioning skills are a core element of critical thinking, this skillset is also fundamental to the field of GE. There are many social and political orthodoxies that GE aims to challenge by presenting alternative perspectives and information to learners. By imploring learners to “open their eyes to the reality of the world” (CoE, 2002), GE positions itself as an educational approach committed to unravelling commonly accepted perspectives in favour of uncovering root causes for issues of injustice.

I propose breaking the skill of questioning orthodoxies into three constituent elements, namely identifying orthodoxies, deconstructing orthodoxies, and envisaging new stories.

4.3.1.2.1 Identify Orthodoxies

It is not possible to challenge or question orthodoxies if we do not first learn to identify where beliefs and practices have become part of the status quo. Keating (2007, p.24) outlines that this can be a difficult skill to master as she highlights that “generally we don't recognise these beliefs as beliefs, we are convinced that these stories are rather accurate factual statements about the world”. Beliefs can become so engrained in societies' collective psyche that it can become impossible to identify their origins as they become taken for granted assumptions about how the world operates (Brookfield, 1995). Often, orthodoxies take the form of simplistic generalisations in relation to entire groups of people or complex topics which can ignore the ways in which our societies, and ourselves as individuals have been shaped by phenomena such as colonialism (Keating, 2007). The danger of these generalisations is that when people conceptualise themselves according to status quo stories, they ignore the interconnections with or accountability we have to others (Keating, 2007). Status quo stories allow us to overlook the ways in which we may be complicit in perpetuating systems of inequality and limit our awareness of realities different from our own.

Brookfield (1995, p.15) likens critical thinking to “hunting assumptions of power and hegemony”. He defines hegemonic assumptions as “those that we think are in our own best interests but that have actually been designed by more powerful others to work against us in the long term” and asserts that critical thinkers must seek out and learn to identify where our assumptions are hegemonic and damaging (Brookfield, 1995, p.15). This skill is also a core element of GE which aims to “open people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world” (CoE, 2002). This highlights the need for GE students to become aware of hegemonic assumptions.

4.3.1.2.2 Deconstruct Orthodoxies

Once students learn to identify and notice orthodoxies, they can begin to question and deconstruct them. hooks (2010) detailed the lived importance of questioning orthodoxies which harm and subjugate entire groups of people. The feminist and civil rights movements are the results of critical questioning of accepted narratives. These ongoing movements are responsible for significant societal changes which have had life-changing

impacts for many people around the world. Deconstructing orthodoxies involves questioning taken for granted narratives and examining underlying implications of orthodoxies which shape society and our interactions.

Andreotti and deSouza (2008b) outline that culturalism is the assumption that western, colonial, Eurocentric culture and knowledge are universal norms from which other cultures deviate. In this way, culturalism can be considered to be the cultural orthodoxies which exist in many societies. Drawing on the work of Spivak (1999), Andreotti and deSouza (2008b) promote deconstructive strategies in critiquing culturalism. A crucial step in learning to deconstruct orthodoxies is learning to unlearn privilege and learning to challenge the systems that benefit us at the expense of others. Andreotti and deSouza (2008a) include unlearning privilege as an aim of their pedagogical approach in the teaching resource TOE which is designed to address the gap in GCE in Europe which often does not incorporate non-Western knowledge and resultingly can reproduce and perpetuate damaging orthodoxies about development and power. In a similar vein, Bourn (2015b) asserts that critical thinking within the context of DE should include space to challenge assumptions about the lived reality and root causes of poverty and inequality.

4.3.1.2.3 Envisage New Stories

Finally, in reshaping the narratives around orthodoxies, Keating (2007) proposes the generation of ‘new stories’ which engage our imaginations and empower us to change not just the pervasive stories but the structures that uphold them. For Keating (2007), it is crucial that interconnection is at the core of these ‘new stories’ as she maintains that separatist thinking is the pervasive norm in harmful oppressive societal orthodoxies.

Envisaging new stories in response to deconstructed orthodoxies responds to the call to include a futures dimension of GE. Hicks (2008) advocates for GE to include an explicit focus on the future, including imagining and planning for a preferable future in the face of knowledge about injustice in the present. Furthermore, each of the constituent approaches within GE includes a focus on imagining new stories which would counteract both damaging discourses and unjust systems of inequality through a focus on action and change. Envisioning new stories is presented as a precursor to action by advocating for a

space for students to envisage alternative futures and reconceptualise their ideas around justice issues.

4.3.1.3 Skill 3: Engage in Self-Reflection

The third core skill identified is self-reflection which is a central component of both critical thinking and GE. GE asks the learner to reflect on their own lives, to make connections between their lives and the topics being explored and to imagine possible futures and how to enact change (Hunt, 2012). As an educational approach intrinsically linked with enacting change for a more just and sustainable world, GE necessarily involves challenging ourselves and reflecting on our place in society (Shah and Brown, 2010). In defining GE and its constituent educational approaches, many authors have included reflection as a core element of their definitions. For example, in defining ESD, the United Nations Economic Commission (2005) maintain that reflection on issues of sustainability can lead to the generation of new ideas and solutions. Clearly, they (ibid) position reflection as a crucial catalyst for change.

Additionally, self-reflection is considered to be a core critical thinking skill. Bensley and Spero (2014) along with Elder and Paul (1996) name self-reflection as inextricably linked to critical thinking and consider it a skill critical thinkers should be applying across all areas of their life. Dwyer et al. (2014) also identify critical thinking as a metacognitive process consisting of purposeful, reflective judgement which increases the chances of producing logical conclusions and solutions. They (ibid) contend that reflective judgement is employed by individuals at all stages of critical thinking (analysis, evaluation, and inference). Not only is the conclusion or solution arrived at important in the reflective process, but so too is the way in which a conclusion is arrived at, reflective judgement involves acknowledging the limits of knowledge and being open to changes of opinion when presented with new evidence (Dwyer et al., 2014). Furthermore, from the field of GCE, Andreotti (2006) implores us to consider criticality not as determining right or wrong but as an opportunity for reflection. Reflection on our own contexts, on our own and others' assumptions about the world, and on the origins of those assumptions can support us to understand the implications of our belief systems regarding power, social-relationships, and the distribution of resources (Andreotti, 2006).

Within self-reflection I identified two sub-skills. These include considering personal perceptions of the world and others, and committing to challenging them.

4.3.1.3.1 Consider Personal Perceptions of the World and Others

Fundamental to self-reflection is an awareness of our own ideas, opinions and perceptions of the world around us and of other people whose lives and experiences differ from our own. Bensley and Spero (2014 p.56) use the term metacognition, which refers to “knowledge, awareness and control of one’s own cognition”, to highlight the importance of self-reflection in the development of critical thinking skills. In their approach to critical thinking, through their focus on metacognition, they highlight the importance of a knowledge and awareness of one’s own mind. Although important in the course of self-reflection, the process of becoming aware of your own assumptions is not a straight forward task. Brookfield (1995, pp.28-29) highlights the complexity of this skill, stating that “no matter how much we think we have an accurate sense of ourselves, we are stymied by the fact that we’re using our own interpretive filters to become aware of our own interpretive filters” which he equates to the “pedagogic equivalent of trying to see the back of one’s head while looking in the bathroom mirror”. The need to become aware of structures and filters beyond ourselves and different from our own is also highlighted by Andreotti (2006, 2008, 2014, 2015), who across her writing has detailed the challenges she has encountered when faced with people unaware of the economic and social structures which influence their lives and ultimately their perception of the world.

In a similar vein, McIntosh (1988) writes about unacknowledged privilege that shapes our experience and view of the world. Without developing an awareness of the privilege we each access as a result of our various identity markers, it is not possible to have a clear understanding of our perception of and assumptions about the world, and also the origins and implications of those ideas. Without this awareness, Brookfield (1995, p.28) posits that we will continue within ‘a self-confirming cycle’ in which “our uncritical accepted assumptions shape actions that then serve to confirm the truth of those assumptions”. To resolve this perpetuating cycle, Brookfield (1995) recommends seeking out lenses that will reflect back at us a different picture of who we are. As this is not a task easily completed alone, this skill is actualised by exposing students to different lenses and perspectives

around global justice issues to support them in viewing their own lives and perspectives from an alternative angle.

4.3.1.3.2 Challenge Personal Perceptions

While developing an awareness of personal perceptions is a critical component of self-reflection, it is important to also commit to challenging and questioning those perceptions. By engaging in self-reflection learners can come to consider deeper questions about their own assumptions and have the opportunity for a transformation of viewpoints. Being open to personal viewpoints evolving or changing is advocated for by Andreotti (2006) who proposes that open mindedness can be a catalyst for further engagement in justice issues. This viewpoint is further supported by Freire's (1970) approach to critical consciousness which asks learners to consider their viewpoints in light of historical, political, and social framings.

Bourn (2015b, p.114) states that questioning our ideas and beliefs is unavoidable when learning about global and development issues. Considering new information in relation to root causes of poverty inevitably leads to rethinking personal views about the world. While inevitable, Bourn (2015b) also concedes that self-reflection in the context of GE can be unsettling as it asks the learner to explore and challenge their own prejudices and question their personal values, attitudes and relationships with the wider world.

4.3.1.4 Skill 4: Use a Values-Lens

Making use of a values-lens when exploring issues of global justice is the final skill identified. As outlined in Chapter Two, one of the complexities facing GE internationally is the rising support for political parties with narrow nationalistic agendas (GENE, 2020b) and the rise in xenophobic populism and hate speech in societies (CoE, 2018). This rise in prejudiced behaviours and attitudes will inevitably be manifest in many classrooms, and is in conflict with the values of GE which focuses on promoting change for a more just, equitable and sustainable world. This conflict in values could cause challenges for educators. Therefore, there is a need for educators to not only self-reflect on their own value system but to support students to recognise their personal values, acknowledge where there are conflicts either internally or with others, notice where values have

influenced the presentation of information they encounter, and learn to engage with values different from their own in a respectful manner. This requires time for reflection, debates and discussions, and opportunities to air opinions within the classroom.

Shah and Brown (2010, p.40) posit that becoming more familiar with their own values, supports learners to be better able to “identify the values implicit in what they see, hear and read”, highlighting that values influence not just our own actions but the actions of others. Recognising the values behind information they encounter supports students in asking critical questions around motives and perspectives of an author or speaker. This can support learners to identify where perspectives which conflict with their own may be originating from a different values base.

While changing values or viewpoints is not a necessary outcome of critical global learning, some degree of change is probable for anyone engaging with global issues in a critical manner as critical thinking necessitates an open-mindedness to new viewpoints and rationale consideration of them. The process of engaging a values-lens involves an open-minded approach to considering multiple perspectives, and the ability to identify where there are contradictions between values and actions.

4.3.1.4.1 Consider Multiple Perspectives

The importance of developing an awareness of multiple perspectives has been established within the first skill in this chapter. Within the context of developing a values-lens, exposure to a diversity of values and perspectives supports students to become aware of the ways in which values shape and influence actions, even subconsciously.

Pollard (2018) questions the extent to which many educators can successfully park their own biases in exploring challenging issues in a way that is open-minded to different perspectives and open-ended without needing to present conclusive answers. A core skill needed for students to embrace critical thinking in the context of GE is to be aware of perspectives which differ from their own and to consider the value systems which inform and influence them (Bourn, 2015a). Learners should be given opportunities “to probe, to contemplate, and to articulate potentially challenging viewpoints” (Pollard, 2018, p.180). Furthermore, educators also need to be prepared for viewpoints which they may find

uncomfortable to arise in the classroom (hooks, 2010). Pollard (2018) recommends providing space for diverse viewpoints to be aired in the classroom, not just those that align with educators' personal perspectives and values. Airing divergent values and opinions in the classroom provides opportunities for students to assess their merit and reject or support their classmates' perspectives. Engagement with diverse opinions and values is also advocated for by the CoE (2015, p.7) who posit that "learning how to engage in dialogue with people whose values are different from one's own and to respect them is central to the democratic process and essential for the protection and strengthening of democracy and fostering a culture of human rights". Furthermore, the CoE (2015) assert that for young people who are frustrated or confused given the diversity of perspectives on different issues, education provides the ideal opportunity to support learners to engage constructively with issues and come to greater understandings. Consequently, educators have the responsibility to expose students to multiple, and particularly non-status quo perspectives as topics are explored. Additionally, learners should have opportunities to voice their own opinions and to hear and consider the viewpoints of their classmates to support the reflective process (Brookfield, 2017).

To expose students to multiple perspectives on a topic is not necessarily a simple exercise of presenting and weighing them equally. Where perspectives diverge from the values of justice and human rights, this should be emphasised to students. Additionally, in linking with the first skill outlined in this chapter, perspectives should be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they are supported by a reliable knowledge base. Ultimately, Bourn (2015b) highlights that engaging with a diversity of viewpoints will hopefully lead learners to reflect on their own perspectives and values, and to engage in dialogue which supports them to listen to, question, and come to respect diversity in peoples' perspectives.

4.3.1.4.2 Identify Contradictions between Values and Actions

Secondly, when learning to identify where values implement and shape our actions and thoughts, it is inevitable to begin noticing where there are contradictions between professed values and actions, either from individuals or from organisations. In her discussion of democratic education, hooks (2010, p.15) identifies the contradictions often found in policy and in rhetoric around equality. While those in positions of power may verbally or at policy level profess their commitments to equality and human rights, the

resultant practices are often at odds with these values. hooks (2010) uses the historical example of Thomas Jefferson, who in the USA contributed significantly to the rise of democracy and spoke publicly about equality, but still owned slaves and thus contributed to the denial of rights for black people.

Therefore, a crucial element of criticality is the ability to identify where your own values may be at odds with your actions. Students should learn to recognise where decisions and actions arise out of a values system, and work towards developing and being consistently conscious of their own values system and observing where their actions align or not with their values. Furthermore, through exploration of values inherent in GE (commitment to human rights, equity, social justice) and their various interpretations, students learn to identify where their values align with or diverge from these core values. Learning to recognise such internal contradictions is recommended by Shah and Brown (2010) who promote challenging our own values by exposing the inconsistencies that we all have in our value systems. For example, they (ibid) highlight the incongruities between holding environmental values and a desire to fly and travel around the world.

4.4 Considerations for Teaching

The second set of considerations which guided my approach to my teaching and data collection are the considerations for teaching which influence critical global learning within the classroom.

While not prescriptive in terms of solutions or approaches, the collection of factors included below represent the aspects of education which, when considered from the outset, would support the teaching of critical global learning. The factors include the external influences which impact on teaching such as student background or societal influences, the pedagogic approaches adopted, the conditions for learning within the classroom, and finally considerations in relation to the outcomes from engaging with critical global learning.

4.4.1 Consideration 1: External Influences

There are many factors external to the education system, which cannot be controlled, but which have an impact on students' experience of, and engagement with, learning. Consequently, it is important for educators to have an awareness of the factors influencing their students' learning to allow them to respond to and mitigate against harm, or harness potential benefits as appropriate. Each student arrives in the learning space as a product of the world they have inhabited up until that point. Some influencing factors are individual such as family background or personal experiences, while other societal and cultural factors can impact on a large group of people simultaneously, though their impact can still be individual to each person. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) present a bioecological model of human development (Figure 5), which highlights systems within and between which people grow and develop.

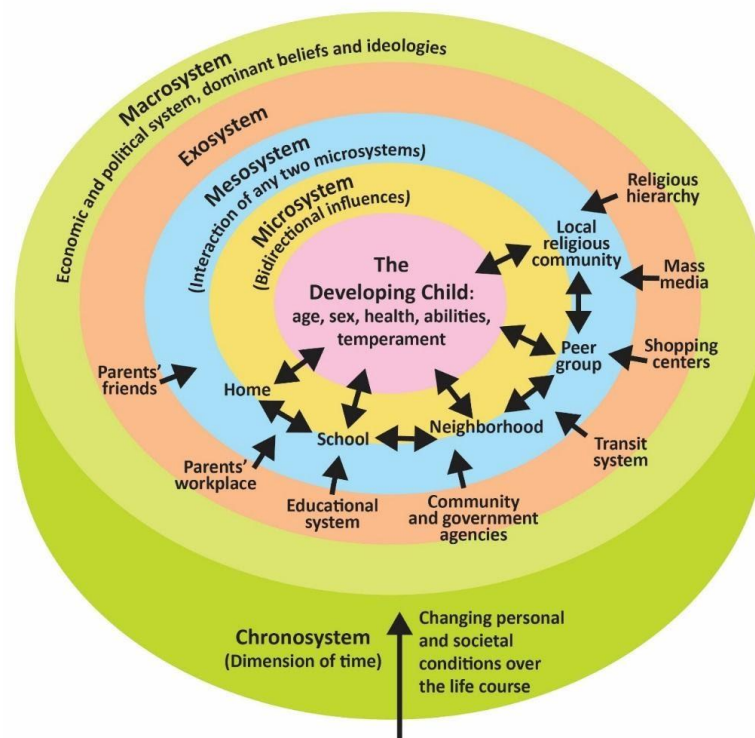


Figure 5: Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) Bioecological Model of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) and Bronfenbrenner's original (1977) bioecological models showcase the ways in which individuals' contextual backgrounds influence their personal and consequently educational development. As highlighted in Figure 5, the model

presents interactions within the various contexts that influence individuals' lives. The extent and nature of these varied interactions and contexts on an individual's development will vary depending on personal circumstances. Within the context of critical global learning, Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) bioecological model suggests that learners' encounters and experiences outside the classroom within their family and community groups or within broader societal systems can influence how they develop the skills identified in this chapter. In particular, students' prior experiences can influence the knowledge and values they bring to the classroom in relation to issues of global justice.

The macrosystem includes the dominant orthodoxies that permeate society through media, political agendas and other means can influence our perspectives, actions, and the way in which we interact with new information and knowledge. Andreotti and deSouza (2008b) label this as our 'cultural baggage' which we all bring to the learning space based on our own personal histories which are socially, culturally, and historically situated. This can include exposure to the rise in xenophobic populism and hate speech being seen internationally (CoE, 2018).

Not only do dominant narratives influence students' engagement in GE, but the way in which students have learned to interact with cultural narratives and information about justice issues can have a significant impact in the GE classroom. The microsystem is the context with the greatest influence over our development (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Within this context, interaction with family, school and peers can cause students to develop a tendency to question what they hear and think critically, or influence them to be disinclined to do so. Ghanizadeh (2017) posits that often students are ill-prepared for critical thinking in higher education due to limited preparation from their primary and secondary education. This is further highlighted by hooks (2010) who suggests that often students in higher education have become so engrossed in dominant societal and political narratives that they can struggle to engage with new ways of thinking.

4.4.2 Consideration 2: Pedagogy

Alexander refers to pedagogy as involving "what one needs to know and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted" (Alexander, 2004, p.11). This conceptualisation of

pedagogy is inclusive of both theory and practice. Alexander (2004) is as much concerned about what happens in the classroom as the rationale behind those decisions. From a theoretical perspective, I draw on Freire's (1974) *Critical Consciousness*, Boler's (1999) *Pedagogy of Discomfort*, and Bourn's (2015) *Pedagogy of Development Education*. The skills included earlier in this chapter suggest some pedagogical approaches necessary within the classroom to support them. The skills speak to an interactive approach to teaching which is focused on dialogue, modelling skills and attitudes, sharing challenging content knowledge, and supporting students to engage with and reflect on their learning.

Critical global learning aims to support students to critically reflect on the world and therefore relies heavily on a dialogical approach to teaching. To support the development of 'critical consciousness' Freire (1974) promotes an emancipatory approach to education which focuses on raising learners' critical capacity, which can support them in changing their perceptions of reality. This is done through equal dialogue between learners and educators as opposed to the 'banking approach' in which educators have absolute authority and ownership of knowledge (Freire, 1970). Freire (1970) considered this dialogical approach to be 'humanising'. Freire's (ibid) dialogical approach was focused on empowering people who were oppressed to become critically aware of the nature of this oppression and to challenge it through reflection and action, which he called praxis. The process relied on linking lessons from the classroom with learners' lived experiences outside the classroom (Freire, 1974). Although the origins of Freire's approach are in liberation for the oppressed, his practices continue to be used across the world in classrooms of learners from all backgrounds, not just those who experience oppression (Shih, 2018).

Boler's (1999, p.176) 'pedagogy of discomfort' which she describes as "both an invitation to inquiry as well as a call to action" echoes Freire's conceptualisation of praxis. Boler (1999, p.176) invites us to learn to "inhabit a more ambiguous and flexible sense of self" in her approach thus inviting learners to engage in collective critical enquiry to learn to see the world differently. A core tenet of Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort is that it be collective, enabling learners and educators to work together on unearthing 'disruptive possibilities'. Boler (1999) believes that education holds the potential to be a space where learners and educators can together unearth and engage in disruptive practices, such as

challenging orthodoxies, questioning oppressive practices and exploring alternative approaches for justice. The collective approach mirrors the assertions of hooks (2010) and Freire (1970) that the teacher-learner relationship be rooted in dialogue and mutual respect. Working collaboratively rather than individually to examine and explore global justice issues enables learners and educators alike to keep each other accountable to the broader nature of issues to avoid reducing complex issues to individual interpretation or impact.

In her pedagogy, Boler (1999) pays particular attention to the emotions which emerge when engaged in critical enquiry. She (ibid) highlights the importance of recognising how emotions can impact on what a person chooses to see, or not to see. Furthermore, the questioning of cherished beliefs and values which follows from engaging in a pedagogy of discomfort can inevitably lead to strong emotions such as fear and anger (Boler, 1999). It might seem counterintuitive to engage in an educational approach which may trigger such a strong emotional response in students. However, Faulkner (2012, p.227) says that the rationale for this approach is emancipatory. She (ibid) believes that Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort offers opportunities which enable us to identify where our reactions may be rooted in societal constructs and help to move beyond these shackles to engage in critical enquiry and disruptive practices. Ultimately, at the core of Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort is a desire for learners and educators alike to critically examine personal values and attitudes in order to enhance awareness and critique of our self-constructed images of ourselves and others and how this can impact on how we see the world.

The pedagogy of DE developed by Bourn (2015b) further echoes the learning from critical consciousness and pedagogy of discomfort. Bourn (2015b, p.195) proposes that a pedagogy of DE is “a process of learning within which learners will interpret and engage in debates on development and make reference to their personal experiences, wider social and cultural influences, and their viewpoints on the wider world”, which he outlines as an approach that:

- *Is framed within an understanding of development and global themes;*
- *Is located within a values base of social justice;*
- *Promotes critical and reflective thinking;*
- *Encourages the learner to make connections between their own life and those of others throughout the world;*

- *Provides opportunities for the learner to have positive and active engagements in society that contribute to their own perspective of what a better world could look like.*

Ultimately, Bourn (2015b) states that it is not the content alone that is important in this field, but the way in which information is presented, perceived, interpreted and promoted. This requires educators to recognise and encourage active engagement from learners in developing their own interpretations (Bourn, 2015b).

GE involves active and participatory learning with a dialogical focus (Bourn, 2015b; Irish Aid, 2017; GENE, 2020b). As established, it also centres on content knowledge that can be challenging and uncomfortable for learners (Andreotti, 2006; Shah and Brown, 2010; Hunt, 2012). The conceptual frameworks (Figure 6) produced for the initiative TOE from Andreotti and deSouza (2008a) provide pedagogical structures which respond to best practice in teaching critical global learning. The TOE resource provides step-by-step lessons exploring concepts such as development, education, equality, and poverty through case studies, challenging questions and reflective activities, which all follow the progression of the two conceptual frameworks. The conceptual framework which informs the methodology used in TOE is inspired by the work of Spivak (1999) and includes learning to unlearn, learning to listen, learning to learn and learning to reach out which are engaged with sequentially (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008a). The TOE initiative also draws attention to the layers, framings and narratives which inform our assumptions through the second conceptual framework which moves through egocentric, ethnocentric, humancentric, and worldcentric framings.



Figure 6: Conceptual Framework for Through Other Eyes (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008b)

TOE responds to common shortfalls in GCE practice which frequently does not explore global issues from the perspective of different contexts, and often leaves common assumptions unexamined. It aims to support educators to develop a toolset to enable learners to reflect on other contexts and engage with other knowledge perspectives (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008a). This resource re-centres the perspectives of indigenous people and looks at the origins and implications of many taken for granted assumptions about development, education, equality, and poverty. The structures and methodological approaches offered within this resource can be adapted to teach about other GE issues by using similar reflective activities and sharing different perspectives.

Additionally, the CDVEC (Emerson et al., 2012) resource Tackling Controversial Issues in the Citizenship Classroom offers dialogical approaches to exploring complex and contested topics many of which intersect with GE. In particular the resource provides a framework for considering teacher stance and encourages reflection on the way in which educators frame issues when presenting them. They (Emerson et al., 2012, p.25) list the possible positions educators can take in the classroom in relation to particular issues as “neutral facilitator, declared interest, official line, ally, or devil’s advocate”. Considering teacher stance from the outset can help educators to clarify their own feelings on specific subjects,

and support the planning process for lessons. Secondly, the resource advocates for consideration of the way in which issues are framed in the classroom. They (ibid) propose looking at topics through a human rights framework, a legal framework, or a social responsibility framework. This approach to topics can support learners in considering topics from a broader perspective and can support educators to challenge discrimination in a structural way (Emerson et al., 2012).

Finally, to support the implementation of the pedagogical approaches outlined here, educators also need to ensure they are continuing to develop and expand their own knowledge base. Reflection is advocated for by Dewey (1902) who posits that educators need to continuously work on their professional judgement and decision making skills to ensure they do not accept without question teaching approaches which appear to offer good results. Bonfield and Horgan (2016) liken critical thinking to teacher reflectiveness and advocate that educators engage in meaningful analysis of their practices followed by deliberate modifications when deemed appropriate.

4.4.3 Consideration 3: Conditions for Learning

The conditions for learning created and supported in the classroom are a further consideration for teaching critical global learning. Specifically, I will explore how a focus on relationships, values, and the learning environment can support educators to plan for and consider appropriate approaches to guide their practice.

4.4.3.1 *Relationships*

The teacher-learner relationship in the classroom is a crucial factor in supporting learner engagement(O'Connor and McCartney, 2007). hooks (2010, p.22) states that when focusing on relationships in the classroom, it is the “mutual relationship between teacher and students that nurtures the growth of both parties, creating an atmosphere of trust and commitment that is always present when genuine learning happens”. Additionally Anderman (2021, p.19) highlights that learners are more “optimally motivated when they feel connected to others ... students want to feel like they belong in your classroom”.

Freire (1970, p.49) advocated for a transformation in the role of the educator from “depositor, prescriber, domesticator” to becoming a student among students. He (ibid) identified communication as the cornerstone of this transformation. Freire (1970) promoted a democratic approach to schooling which included an emphasis on respectful teacher-learner relationships in which the educator acknowledged the limitations of their own knowledge and the legitimacy of the knowledge brought to the learning space by their students. Through dialogue the educator co-creates meaning alongside learners. The educator in this scenario is expected to consciously and consistently re-form their own reflections and conceptualisations in light of those offered by learners (Freire, 1974). In this way an authentic relationship is built which is respectful and mutually-beneficial for both parties. The approach to the teacher-learner relationship taken by hooks (2010) reflects much of what was promoted by Freire. She (ibid p.22) declares that “when students are fully engaged, professors no longer assume the sole leadership role in the classroom”. Instead, she (ibid) asserts that when responsibility for learning is shared, the classroom begins to take on the characteristics of a co-operative in which all members contribute to ensure optimal use of all resources in the learning space.

Purkey and Novak (2015, p.1) reflect the contentions of Freire and hooks in asserting that “education should be a collaborative, cooperative activity” while also emphasising that the educator must invite participation. Their contentions represent another dimension of the teacher-learner relationship which relates to the extent to which educators purposefully invite participation from learners through both the content of what they say and through their body language, voice and actions. Bates (2019) contends that the invitational approach promoted by Purkey and Novak can aid in conveying respect, care, trust, optimism and intentionality. This in turn enhances the teacher-learner relationship and enhances engagement and learning in the classroom.

4.4.3.2 Values

GE is committed to values of equity, justice and human rights (Hunt, 2012; Bourn, 2015a; GENE 2020a). These values influence not only the content of lessons but the way in which GE is facilitated. A values-based approach to GE supports learners to articulate the connections between their values and actions through engaging with the values and perceptions that learners bring to the classroom and creating a learning environment that

reflects a variety of perspectives (Sharma, 2020). A focus on values in the classroom also supports students in exploring and developing some of the key dispositions of critical global learning through immersing the teaching and learning space with the values of equity, justice and human rights.

Just as self-reflection is a core critical global learning skill, so too does it contribute to learning conditions within the classroom. Palmer (1998, p.2) states that “we teach who we are” and that as we teach, we project the essence of who we are, including our values, onto our students and the subject matter we are teaching. Who we are is undeniably intertwined with the way in which we approach our subject matter and the relationships we develop with our students. Consequently, to engage in ‘good teaching’, educators must commit to getting to know themselves. Palmer (1998, p.2) considers knowledge of the self as being just as crucial as knowing your students and subject-matter when it comes to delivering ‘good teaching’. Engaging in self-discovery to get to know the self and our values better can be challenging. It can happen that our values and verbal commitments do not match our actions. This is what Whitehead (1989, p.42) calls “experiencing oneself as a living contradiction” or what Brookfield (2017) refers to as feeling like an imposter. Glenn (2020) acknowledges that this can be common and posits that the disconnect that educators sometimes experience between their values and their practice can be the stimulus for practice-based research.

Acknowledging that our values impact on our teaching can require us as educators to challenge ourselves to live more authentically in identifying where we experience ourselves as living contradictions (Whitehead, 1989) when our values and practices do not match. Within critical global learning this can mean exploring the complex nuances of justice issues and going beyond the surface level commitment to justice as a concept and begin to learn about the wide-reaching implications of injustice in our own and our students’ daily lives. This can result in critical and sometimes uncomfortable conversations with students, parents, and fellow colleagues in the pursuit of authentically living out the values of justice and equity in the classroom.

Becoming conscious of personal values can support educators in their practice, but it is also crucial to be aware of potentially competing values within the classroom and the influence this can have on students’ receptivity to learning. As a teacher educator I am

conscious that values not only influence my practices, but can also impact on students' engagement with their learning. Seethaler et al. (2019) outline that failing to consider learners' values can be one of the most significant reasons that teaching can fail. They (ibid) posit that educators should be conscious of learners' values when framing their teaching to ensure that those whose worldview may be in conflict with the values being promoted are not alienated from their learning.

4.4.3.3 Learning Environment

Finally, awareness of the learning environment is a key condition for learning which can be harnessed to foster reflection and engagement in the classroom. The fields of critical thinking and GE both involve engaging with reflection, debate, discussion, and an openness to hearing and analysing a variety of perspectives. The learning environment can impact on the degree to which these processes are successful and the extent to which learners authentically engage with them (Bonfield and Horgan, 2016). Baars et al. (2020) define the learning environment as inclusive of both the physical and the psychosocial conditions which influence learning.

Through an extensive literature review Baars et al. (2020) found a reciprocal relationship between the psychosocial and physical learning environments which dynamically respond to changes in conditions of either. They (ibid) identified the physical learning environment as inclusive of natural elements (such as light, sound, temperature), individualisation (such as fitness for purpose of furniture, flexibility of space, and ownership of space), and stimulation (including availability of peripheral learning in the physical space such as displays). They (ibid) were also able to sub-divide the dimensions of the psychosocial learning environment to include personal development (such as open-ended learning goals, subject integration and personal connections), relationships (including teacher-learner and learner-learner support and involvement), and finally system maintenance and change (involving organisation, routines, flexibility, shared control of learning environment and processes). Some of the dimensions of the physical learning environments are not easily influenced such as natural elements or flexibility of the space. However, educators can have more control over the level of stimulation in a classroom (Muijs and Reynolds, 2018). Additionally, much of the psychosocial learning environment can be adapted to support the needs of learners.

As outlined, critical global learning necessitates a learning environment which promotes engagement with reflexivity. While acknowledging the need to create a learning environment which encourages debate and discussion and in which learners feel they can voice their opinion and ask questions, hooks (1994) challenges the notion that the learning environment should always be a safe and harmonious space. Given the complex and contested nature of many GE topics, there is a need for the learning environment to contribute to challenging learners preconceived ideas by promoting criticality in relation to commonly accepted orthodoxies which may be damaging to some members of society (Andreotti, 2006). This can be challenging and uncomfortable for students who find their beliefs and values being contested. However, hooks (1994) contends that uncontested, conceptualisations that reinforce racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of xenophobia are very damaging. Both the psychosocial and physical learning environments can be harnessed to encourage engagement and debate while ensuring that learning remains critical and harmful perspectives are contested.

4.4.4 Consideration 4: Outcomes

The final consideration relates to the potential outcomes from critical global learning that educators should be cognisant of. Awareness of outcomes from the outset is helpful in directing planning and developing learning objectives. There are two categories of outcomes from critical global learning to be cognisant of. Firstly, there are those that are individual to each student and include both personal and professional development. Secondly, there are outcomes for society more generally due to an increase in critical global learners.

4.4.4.1 *Personal Outcomes*

On a personal level, students can be expected to have an increased awareness of global issues including an awareness of the complexity and contested nature of many topics (Andreotti, 2006; Shah and Brown, 2010; Hunt, 2012). This increased awareness can include coming to understand “complex global, ecological, political, social and economic systems” (Skirbekk et al., 2013, p.5). Additionally, students of critical global learning should be able to demonstrate the impact their learning has had on their values and attitudes (Shah and Brown, 2010; Pollard, 2018). It is also expected that through

engagement with critical global learning, students would develop a commitment to human rights and justice (CoE, 2002; Tormey, 2003; GENE, 2020b).

At a professional level, it is expected that engagement with critical global learning within ITE will lead to students feeling more comfortable bringing the cognisant concepts and perspectives into their own teaching (O’Flaherty and Liddy, 2018). However, this outcome is not guaranteed. Baily et al. (2017) highlighted that although many students are enthusiastic about teaching GE following their engagement with it during ITE, others would feel uncomfortable doing so unless supported by curricular and assessment guidelines within their school setting. This finding highlights the importance of educational policy and school culture in supporting students’ implementation of critical global learning within their own teaching. For teacher educators, it is important to be aware of factors such as this beyond our control.

4.4.4.2 Societal Outcomes

The purpose of GE is to challenge stereotypes and to promote responsible, ethical and thoughtful action for social change (Andreotti, 2006; Hunt, 2012). In seeking to identify what unites the approaches within GE, GENE (2020b) list “action for greater human rights for all” as one of the non-negotiable core tenets of GE. This sentiment is reflected in definitions of DE (Tormey, 2003; Liddy, 2013), peace education (Harris and Howlett, 2013), EfS (Taylor et al., 2015) and GCE (UNESCO, 2015; WorldWide Global Schools, 2020). Fundamentally, GE calls learners to engage in praxis (Freire, 1970) and to do something with the knowledge they are acquiring about the world, and to have a positive impact on development at local, national and international levels. Characterising action is complex as it can take many forms, however, having an impact on the world first requires learners to acknowledge and take responsibility for the roles they play in systems which perpetuate inequity and injustice. Shah and Brown (2010) and those working on a 21st century skills framework (Ananiadou and Claro, 2009; Wagner, 2009; Luna Scott, 2015) contend that GE and the development of critical thinking skills should prepare learners to address future unpredictable challenges. They (ibid) propose that education should first and foremost equip learners with the skills and dispositions to be able to be adaptable and responsive in the future.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter built on Chapters Two and Three by detailing the key skills and considerations for teaching critical global learning. The skills and considerations presented in this chapter draw on the synergies between GE and critical thinking, and are considerate of the challenges they each face. The skills and considerations outlined in this chapter were used to guide and inform my teaching of critical global learning, which was the focus of this research project. Chapter Five will outline the methodological decisions I made when designing and engaging in this research project. The contents of this chapter also represent the foundations for the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* which is presented in full in Chapter Nine.

5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This research project is concerned with inquiring into my own practice and digging deeper into the pedagogy I employ as a teacher educator. Prior to commencing this research, I had identified an inconsistency within my practice which guided the direction of this research. I had taught Global Education on the Social Studies module which was the focus of this research three times prior to commencing this research. Consistently, students indicated through conversations and in formal evaluations of the modules that they believed themselves to have effectively developed critical thinking skills due to their engagement with the module. However, this contrasted with the reality presented in their assignments and in class work, where students often presented ideas they had heard or read without reflection, application to their own lives, or critique. The disparity between students' perceived skill levels and their presented or displayed levels was the spark that inspired this research project. Having identified these disparities in both student outcomes and in my own teaching practices, I was motivated by a desire to identify the areas of my practice where I could better support student learning. I was drawn to explore the relationship between my practices as a teacher educator and outcomes for students in terms of their skills and dispositions towards critical thinking. Furthermore, the outcomes from my research contribute to the wider academic field and offer new models for approaching the teaching of critical global learning.

This chapter details the methodological decisions I made in undertaking this research project. I outline the foundations of research through an exploration of paradigms, highlighting the pragmatic approach I adopted. Additionally, in this chapter I share my self-study action research approach to methodology, and the data collection and analysis methods I employed. I consider the merits and limitations of different approaches, offering a rationale for the choices I made in this project and highlighting where my approach was adaptable and flexible in response to my context. Finally, this chapter offers an overview of the ethical considerations which impacted on and informed this research and the steps taken to reduce risk.

5.2 Research Paradigms

Guba and Lincoln (2005) define paradigms as worldviews that reflect a researchers' assumptions about reality, methodology, ethics and epistemology. When engaging with research, it is important to be conscious of the philosophical assumptions which influence the research approach and interpretation of findings. Often, particular epistemological and ontological beliefs lend themselves more easily to one methodological approach over another. Compatible ontological assumptions about what constitutes reality, epistemological assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge creation, and research methodologies have traditionally been combined to form research paradigms. Scotland (2012) posits that the underlying assumptions guiding these approaches to research are theoretical, they can never be proven or disproven, giving each approach equal weight and opportunity to generate valid outcomes. Thus, the researcher is tasked with identifying the most appropriate approach for their setting and question.

Traditionally, within educational research there have been two core research paradigms which emanate from opposing belief systems in relation to the philosophical assumptions which influence research approaches. The positivist (sometimes referred to as scientific) paradigm 'seeks to generalise', whereas the interpretive (sometimes referred to as constructivist) paradigm 'seeks to understand' (Scotland, 2012, p.14). Each approach includes beliefs about epistemology and ontology, typically resulting in distinct approaches to data collection. Positivist research is often associated with generating quantitative data (numbers) while interpretive research is usually linked to qualitative data (words).

Pragmatism, a third paradigmatic approach, combines methods used in both positivist and interpretive research. Pragmatists are concerned with experience, and aim to identify the most appropriate tools to address identified problems through research. Distinguishing pragmatism from other paradigms which take firm philosophical positions, Biesta (2010, p.97) conceptualises pragmatism as a "set of philosophical tools that can be used to address problems". Rather than outlining a rigid set of beliefs from the outset and using them as a tool for inquiry and as an analytical lens, pragmatism recognises that engagement with new circumstances and knowledge can present previously unconsidered beliefs which are then considered within the evolving research (Morgan, 2014). Morgan (2014) draws on the

work of Dewey to highlight how pragmatism seeks to break down the dualism between the two traditional paradigms. They differ philosophically in their approaches to knowledge as positivists believe that “the world exists apart from our understanding of it” whereas within the interpretive paradigm it is believed that “the world is created by our conceptions of it” (Morgan, 2014, p.1048). In contrast to these opposing views, Dewey posits that these two beliefs can co-exist and emphasises experience and context as the essential starting points for discussing the nature of the world. This is further emphasised by Frankel Pratt (2016) who contends that pragmatists are interested in pursuing a non-dualistic view of the world and seek to collapse the traditional epistemological and ontological divides. Similarly, Biesta (2010, p.99) rejects paradigm thinking which he maintains is often considered as a *container concept* which leads to “a polarization of the discussion rather than interaction and exchange”. He (ibid) argues that researchers who buy in completely to paradigm thinking can use them as an excuse not to engage in discussions about the assumptions which can underpin, inform and influence their research. Furthermore, he (ibid) maintains that the traditional approach to paradigms is over-simplistic and tends to lump together many assumptions that do not necessarily belong together.

Dewey’s conceptualisation of pragmatism is problem-based and concerned with generating, implementing and evaluating possible solutions. Pragmatic research begins with the identification of a problem and considers the possible methods for addressing this problem rather than first considering metaphysical assumptions about the nature of truth and the world as with other paradigmatic approaches such as positivism or interpretivism. Accepting Pratt’s (2016) contention that pragmatists adopt a non-dualistic view of the world, I hold that both subjectivism and objectivism, realism and relativism can coexist, that each philosophical position has purpose and merit in different scenarios.

In this research project I embrace a subjective epistemology as data and knowledge were co-created between researcher and participants. Rather than focusing on discovering an objective reality, I sought to engage in a journey of uncovering and ultimately acting on the research setting while acknowledging the broader context which underpins and weaves through all situations. This assertion honours Biesta’s (2010) contention that while pragmatists are not tied to any one approach or belief system, they are required to identify the underlying epistemology which informs their research design. In taking a pragmatic

approach to my research, I committed to maintaining an open-minded approach, being guided by my values, but continuing to challenge them and adopt a willingness to be open to challenges that emerge through the research project.

5.3 Context

As outlined in Chapter One, this research project takes place within the Higher Education Institution where I work as a teacher educator. I work with students undertaking B.Ed. degrees who are studying to become primary school teachers. It is within the B.Ed. programme that this research project took place, and so I outline some basic context for that programme which impacted on methodological decisions I took.

The profile of students in ITE generally, which is also reflected in my institution, is quite homogenous. Consistently, 80% of students on the programme each year are female (Higher Education Authority, 2020a). Additionally, there is limited cultural diversity in ITE as in excess of 95% of students are from White Irish backgrounds (Heinz and Keane, 2018). In Ireland, a high proportion of students in ITE are from higher socio-economic backgrounds relative to university students on other degree courses where there is more of a mix of socio-economic backgrounds (Higher Education Authority, 2020b). Additionally, in excess of 90% of entrants into ITE in Ireland identify as Roman Catholic, which is 10% higher than the general population (Heinz and Keane, 2018). Finally, as the only institution on the West coast of Ireland offering ITE programmes in primary teaching, the majority of our students come from counties in the west of Ireland, which has a considerably lower rate of cultural diversity than areas closer to Dublin (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Together, these statistics highlight the limited cultural, religious, socio-economic, and gender diversity represented in the student population and indicate that our students may have limited exposure to diversity.

There are upwards of 430 students in each year of the four-year B.Ed. programme, divided into seven groups of approximately sixty. Students receive lectures and tutorials within these groups, sometimes also joining with other groups for larger lectures. This research project took place over three cycles. Within the first cycle, one group of students took part, within the second and third cycles two groups of students took part each time. Students are timetabled for roughly thirty hours of contact time weekly for lectures across eight separate

modules which often include multiple subject areas each. Students undertake assessments in all areas requiring them to engage in significant amounts of independent study weekly.

This research project was undertaken with students in the second year of the B.Ed. programme and focuses on core Social Studies modules which include GE as one component alongside lectures in pedagogy of history and pedagogy of geography. During cycle one of data collection, GE was included in the Spring Social Studies module only, two thirds of which was allocated to GE. Students received two GE contact hours per week. For the first hour of the week students received practical tutorials in groups of sixty and the second hour took the form of larger group lectures, with two or three groups together. Tutorials concentrated on pedagogical skills for teaching GE in the primary classroom (such as using images, videos, discussion methodologies, simulation games, and guidelines for teaching controversial issues) and large group lectures focused on developing students' knowledge of global justice issues (by using both human rights and the sustainable development goals as frameworks to consider topics such as the language of development, structural inequality, gender, sustainability, migration, racism and citizenship). During rounds two and three of data collection, the Social Studies modules had been reconfigured and GE was included as an equal element of both the Autumn and Spring modules. This meant that students received one hour per week of GE in groups of sixty for the full academic year. This decision was made in response to larger structural issues in the B.Ed. programme. Data collection for this research project was also used to identify the most appropriate way to divide the content of the previous module across two semesters.

Details of the B.Ed. programme are available at: <https://www.mic.ul.ie/faculty-of-education/programme/bachelor-of-education-primary-teaching-mi005mi006>

5.4 Choosing a Methodology

The journey to mapping this research project began with an identification of a topic (critical thinking), a broader field (GE), and a context (ITE) that I was driven to explore further. I considered multiple methodological approaches which would support me in exploring and ultimately improving my practice as a teacher educator. McDonagh (2020, p.123) posit that when identifying a research methodology for classroom research focused

on enhancing practice, it is necessary that “the methodology must reflect the complexities of real classrooms and teaching”. This can mean ensuring that the research methodology is flexible enough to respond to the oftentimes messy reality of real-life teaching.

Additionally, it was important to me to ensure that there would be opportunities to collect multiple forms of data which would include the varied perspectives and experiences of students in my classrooms. Action research presented the most appropriate approach to focus on change and improvement. Rather than capturing a picture of current practices and experiences, I wanted to deepen my understanding of my practice and to explore how to respond to challenges as they arose. I wanted to use the opportunity of this dissertation for professional development both as a researcher and as a teacher educator.

5.5 Action Research

The focus of my research has been to explore my own practices as a teacher educator to understand its impact on my student’s learning. The aims of my study reflect those of the field of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (Raffoul et al., 2021). As a field, SoTL invites scholars to critically investigate their teaching and determine whether their teaching practices hinder or support students learning (Ryan, 2013b). Action research has been used to enhance our knowledge in SoTL (Gray et al., 2007; Albers, 2008; Ryan, 2013b) as it provides a framework for educators to examine their practices and develop research-informed approaches to enhance teaching and learning.

The term “action research” was introduced by Kurt Lewin in 1946 to describe research carried out with the aim of bringing about change in social systems through researchers acting on or in the system (Lewin, 1946). Lewin (1946, pp.202-203) conceptualised action research as “comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action”. Lewin (1946) saw many problems with traditional scientific research, which he felt often did not impact social issues at a local level and envisaged action research as a mechanism to bring about change in society through research.

The evolution of action research has been characterised by its application to social issues requiring solutions with a foundation in research. Describing action research, Susman and Evered (1978, p.586) posit that “the act itself is presented as the means of both changing

the system and generating critical knowledge about it”. Action research creates new knowledge by using practical inquiry methods, which lead to personal or professional development (Koshy, 2005). As a methodology, action research evolved as a way to bridge the gap between research and practice (De Zeeuw, 2003).

In explaining the evolution of action research, McNiff (2014, p.16) outlines that, at its root action research is concerned with people engaging in everyday actions which they observe and reflect upon to try and live “productive and meaningful lives”. Although action research was formalised by Lewin in 1946, who introduced it to educational institutions as a research methodology and a legitimate way of knowing, much of the practice of action research in education remains focused on the informal everyday inquiry described by McNiff (2014). This “practical enquiry method” (Koshy, 2005) used to explore everyday actions can be understood not as a set of concrete steps “but a process of learning from experience, a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning” (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.13).

Within the field of education, teacher researchers engage in action research as a form of living authentic continuing professional development (CPD) which has “the potential to change both the practice and the practitioner irrevocably” (Roche, 2016, p.25). Action research is a process which helps to answer the question ‘how do we know what we know?’. Educators often employ their instincts to judge their teaching and the understanding and engagement levels of learners. However, action research provides a structure to guide these instinctual approaches to teaching, to challenge our assumptions and ensure we are being guided by best practice. Action research is undertaken by practitioners who wish to examine and improve upon their practices by testing hypotheses in their work to help them alleviate or illuminate practical difficulties (Corey, 1954; Creswell, 2014; McMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

Nolen and Putten (2007) posit that action research within education helps to inform teaching and curriculum design, leading to improvements in practice. In this way, the theory derived from action research by teacher researchers has significance at a variety of levels. At a personal level, the researcher develops their awareness and understanding of their practice, at a micro level the learners and school community are impacted by both

immediate and long-term outcomes, and at a macro level the wider educational community can benefit from the learning generated and shared (McDonagh et al., 2020).

5.5.1 Characteristics of an Action Research Project

Action research is used across multiple disciplines and is certainly not unique to the field of education. Acknowledging these different fields and approaches to action research, Herr and Anderson (2015) identify some of the common characteristics found across multiple disciplines which make action research distinct from other forms of research. These include the problem-based nature of the research, the cyclical approach, and reflective methodologies.

5.5.1.1 *Problem-based Research*

Action research is undertaken by practitioners who wish to examine and improve upon their practices by testing action hypothesis in their work to help them alleviate or illuminate practical difficulties (Corey, 1954). It is undertaken by researchers who are focused explicitly on making practical differences to the issue or problem they are addressing through their research (Coleman, 2019).

McNiff et al. (1996) outline the basic process of action research which begins with reviewing our current practice and identifying an aspect that we wish to improve, with the aim of identifying what they term 'new ways forward'. Whitehead (2019) regards the identification of a problem or an area of concern as 'methodologically central'. He (ibid) contends that this is crucial in identifying what he terms the "I as a living contradiction". It is his contention that the concern or problem central to action research should relate to the practitioner and to the contradictions that exist between our practices and our beliefs. Although imploring action researchers to begin by identifying contradictions, problems, or areas for improvement, McNiff and Whitehead (2002) assert that the process is not always straight forward, as it can be hard to identify precisely what we aim to improve and why. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the inconsistency between students perceived skill levels, and their presented skills which was the impetus for this study, is also the core problem this research aimed to address. These discrepancies are the focus of this research

project as I endeavour to improve my practices and student outcomes in response to McNiff et al.'s (1996) call to identify 'new ways forward'.

Additionally, although this project emerged in response to a specific challenge, additional 'problems' emerged throughout the course of the project as a result of focused observation and reflection on my practices (Appendix B). These new problems do not overshadow the overarching aim of the project to focus on developing student teachers' critical thinking skills but complement the journey. McNiff and Whitehead (2002, p.56) maintain that "in action research terms it is possible to address multiple issues while still maintaining a focus on one". Berry (2008, p.31) also identifies that in classroom-based research, while we might find solutions to some problems, each solution often leads to the identification of further problems which interconnect and impact each other.

5.5.1.2 Cyclical Research Approach

McNiff and Whitehead (2002, p.13) conceptualise action research as "a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning" and further contend that "a final outcome does not exist". Indeed, even after formal data collection concludes, as long as researchers are engaged in practice they may continue to informally reflect on, change and improve their practices in much the same way as they did during the formal research cycles. Action research is designed as a continuous process which allows the researcher or practitioner to ensure they are consistently developing their practice and meeting the needs of their context and learners (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002).

The continuous cyclical nature of action research is its predominant characteristic which requires the practitioner researcher to continuously review and reflect on their own practices to ascertain what is going well and consider what they can and should improve upon. Although many interpretations of action research cycles exist, all involve planning, acting, observing and reflecting in some form (Herr and Anderson, 2015). These steps are repeated multiple times to enable the researcher to make changes to their practice based on observations and to measure the impact of these changes. Planning for, implementing and reflecting on action is the core of the action research cycle.

Table 2 showcases examples of different authors interpretations of the cycles which action researchers undertake. Each cycle, consisting of a spiral of activities undertaken, should increase the researcher's knowledge of the problem being explored and illuminate paths towards identifying possible solutions which can be implemented in the following cycle (Herr and Anderson, 2015).

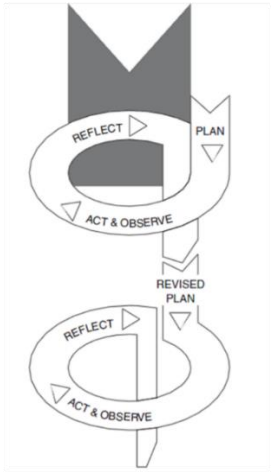
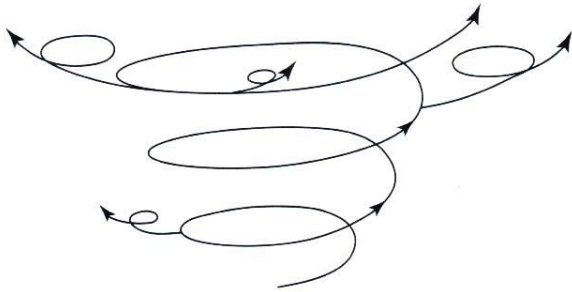
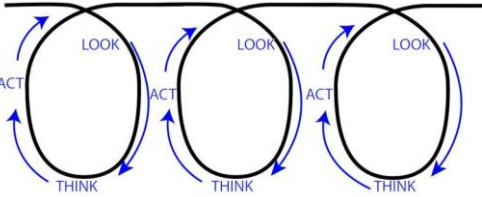
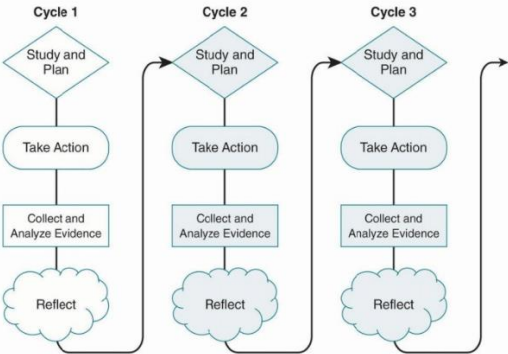
| | |
|---|--|
|  |  |
| <p>Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) Action Research Cycles.</p> | <p>McNiff's (2017) Action Research as a generative, transformational evolutionary process.</p> |
|  |  |
| <p>Stringer's (2007) Action Research Interacting Spiral.</p> | <p>Riel's (2010) Action Research Model: Progressive problem solving with action research</p> |

Table 2: Examples of Action Research Cycles

There is no defined length for a cycle in action research and no requirement as to the number of cycles engaged with. Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p.83) suggest that the

iterative cycles of action and reflection sometimes take place concurrently and can often cover different time spans. This was the case for this research project which involved three cycles of varying lengths. As can be seen from Table 3 below, not only did the length of cycles vary but so did the participant numbers and the module context. Being flexible with these details allowed me to be responsive to the emerging data and to revise my research approach as I identified areas that required further exploration. For example, originally research participants were going to be confined to just one group (out of the seven groups per year) but after the first cycle, I felt that working with a broader group of students would enable me to form a more comprehensive picture of the student experience of the modules. Furthermore, originally this research project was designed to span two cycles, but following the second cycle it became clear that a third cycle was necessary to allow for further changes to be made and their impact observed and analysed. The third cycle focused only on the content deemed most appropriate to this study, unlike the previous two which explored the modules in full.

| | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 | Cycle 3 |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| When? | Spring Semester 2018 (half academic year) | Autumn semester 2018 and Spring semester 2019 (full academic year) | Autumn semester 2019 (half academic year) |
| Duration | 12 weeks | 12 weeks in Autumn plus 10 weeks in Spring | 12 weeks |
| No. of modules | 1 module | 2 modules | 1 module |
| Frequency of lectures | 2 lectures/week | 1 lecture/week | 1 lecture/week |
| Participants | 1 group (47 students in group A) | 2 groups (51 students in group B, 59 students in group C) (same groups across both semesters and modules) | 2 groups (44 students in group D, 45 students in group E) |
| Module focus | Joint focus on exploring global justice topics and learning how to teach GE in the primary school classroom (taught simultaneously). | Joint focus on exploring global justice topics (Autumn semester) and learning how to teach GE in the primary school classroom (Spring semester). | Exploring global justice topics. |

Table 3: Details of Action Research Cycles for this Project

As crucial as the cyclical design is to action research, Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) warn us that the reality of the research process is rarely as clean cut as it is presented in diagrams. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) describe the process as messy and unpredictable, highlighting that this reflects real-life. Cycles often overlap as initial plans rapidly change when faced with the reality of practice. Additionally, reflection is usually ongoing throughout the process rather than neatly located at the conclusion of the action segment. Hence, the researcher must be adaptable in their approach to their action research project.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) describe the process as fluid, open and responsive. Being mindful of the unpredictability of the process, Coghlan and Brannick (2014) also encourage researchers to be cognisant of the unforeseen events that are likely to occur throughout the process and recommend building these into the research plan.

Although designed as a linear three-cycle process, the real-life context for the project meant that there were often mini-cycles within individual weeks of data collection. The modules in question were taught to the full year group, meaning that each lecture was taught seven times. Teaching was divided between a part-time lecturer, Anna, who also acted as one of my critical friends, and myself. I wrote and designed the content for each weekly session that we then both delivered to different groups. However, there were often opportunities to reflect and refine the approach as each session was taught. I would reflect with Anna when she had completed her teaching, and I also had the opportunity to gather feedback from students in the groups that engaged in this research project on an ongoing basis. There were many weeks where it was possible to respond to these reflections and feedback and make changes to the delivery before completing the seven sessions. These mini action research cycles meant that far from experiencing clean and organised cycles of planning, acting, reflecting and revising my plans, I was engaged in all steps simultaneously and repeatedly within each larger action research cycle. Figure 7 below showcases the messy feeling of cycles within cycles and presents an example of one mini-cycle we underwent.

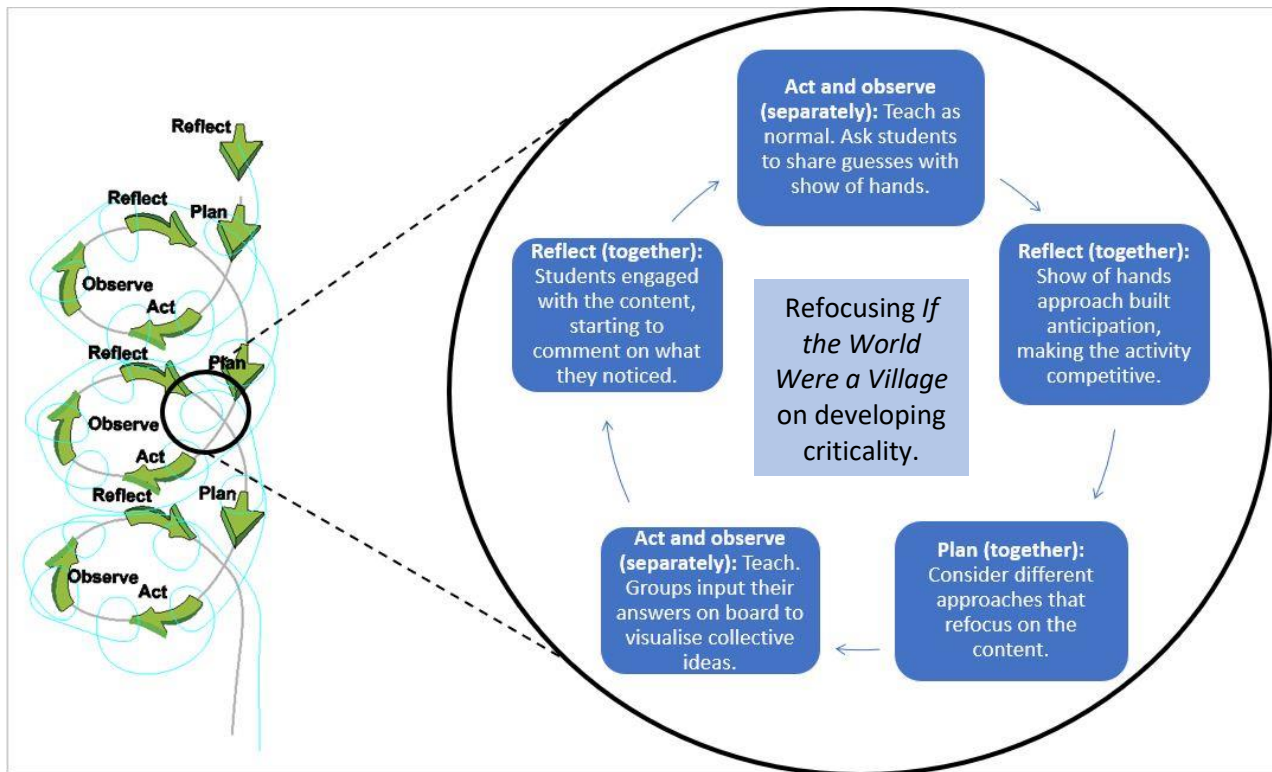


Figure 7: Example of One Weekly Mini-Cycle of Action Research

Although more complex in reality than any of the diagrams suggest, the purpose of adopting a cyclical research design remains intact. Cycles of action research allow the researcher to act on their problem or context with the intention of transforming and ultimately improving the situation being studied.

5.5.1.3 Reflection as a Core Component of Action Research

The centrality of reflective practice in research is not unique to action research, it is recommended throughout many research methodologies, particularly those that relate to the exploration of practice (Fook, 2019). Reflection is evident as a core component of the action research spiral which informs the planning stage and is a key contributor in developing revised plans for implementation in subsequent action research cycles.

As it pertains to research, reflection entails thinking deeply, and critically exploring not only our actions and experiences, but the underlying assumptions and motivations which drive them (Mertler, 2017; Fook, 2019). Mirroring the action research cycle, Mertler (2017) describes the natural cycle that educators undertake when observing the learning

process, analysing and interpreting what they discover and then using this information to inform future planning. Ultimately, reflection enables us to evaluate our experiences and use what we discover to inform and influence future practice (Fook, 2019). Similarly, Roche (2016) highlights the future-focused nature of reflection within action research, contending that though reflection must necessarily focus on the past, it is future oriented in its purpose.

Furthermore, Coghlan and Brannick (2014) posit that as researchers we should be engaged not only in reflection as one of the action research steps in meeting the projects' aim, but we should also be reflecting on and evaluating each of the action research steps as we engage with them. This processes of learning about learning and reflecting on our reflections are what elevates action research above every-day problem solving and supports the development of 'actionable knowledge' (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014, p.13). While acknowledging that reflection must take place at the end of each action research cycle to inform planning for the following cycle, Mertler (2017) also promotes systematic and continued engagement with reflection throughout all stages of the action research cycle. As a purposeful process which is woven through all stages of action research, Roche (2016) considered reflection not only as a component of research which informs action, but as an action in and of itself.

5.5.2 Positionality and Perspective within Action Research

Action research can be categorised by the positionality adopted by the researcher in how they relate themselves to the participants and the setting of the research project. Herr and Anderson (2015) offer the following continuum of positionality in action research:

1. Insider (researcher studies own self/practise);
2. Insider in collaboration with other insiders;
3. Insider(s) in collaboration with outsider(s);
4. Reciprocal collaboration (insider-outsider teams);
5. Outsider(s) in collaboration with insider(s);
6. Outsider(s) studies insider(s).

Similarly, McNiff (2017) draws on the typology developed by Reason and Bradbury (2008) who refer to first-, second-, and third-person action research where first-person research refers to insider self-studies, second-person research applies to collaborative research, and third-person research is conducted by outsiders to the research setting. Herr and Anderson (2015) highlight that action research has traditionally been undertaken by outsiders contracted by organisations or community groups to address an identified problem or evaluate a programme. Additionally, McNiff (2017) highlights that second- and third-person research is often commonplace in higher education. This occurs when external researchers observe and report on what other practitioners are doing in their practice which some believe to be the most appropriate way to conduct research (McNiff, 2017). This approach can be aligned with positions 4, 5, or 6 from Herr and Anderson's (2015) continuum of positionality, which could all be considered as outsider research. While an outsider approach has been more commonplace traditionally in action research, within education settings, insider, sometimes referred to as 'first-person' or 'self-study', forms of action research are becoming more widely accepted and more prevalent (McNiff, 2017). Herr and Anderson (2015, p.38) highlight that the increased uptake in insider research reflects the prevalence of practitioners who "see research as a way to deepen their own reflection on practise towards problem solving and professional development, as well as a way to generate knowledge of practise from the inside out". Self-study action research is focused on the 'I' who is researching and is concerned with experiences of the researcher, giving the researcher the opportunity to offer explanations informed by their own lives and personal contexts, thus distinguishing it from outsider research. McNiff (2017, p.15) offers that the two separate approaches to action research diverge in the way they contribute to theory which can now be understood in two ways: "as an abstract propositional form about what is happening for other people, and as an embodied personal form about what is happening for me".

Drawing on the work of Clandinin and Connolly (1995) and Smith and Lytle (1993), Herr and Anderson (2015) outline that research conducted by outsiders can pose challenges. They highlight that there is often frustration for educators when knowledge about teaching is being generated exclusively by academic researchers which may be of limited value to them. Additionally, they (ibid) highlight that often outsiders lack the nuanced understanding of the complex contextual landscape of teaching which can be subjective,

personal, and require a knowledge of the historical and relational contexts to be fully understood. These frustrations have led many in education to embark on insider or self-study action research themselves, feeling that they are capable of offering their own explanations for their practice (McNiff, 2017).

Coghlan and Brannick (2014) developed a matrix which locates the researcher within their research in relation to their organisation (Figure 8). They (ibid) maintain that as an insider action researcher, the nature of your research project will be impacted by the level of involvement from, and intentions of, the organisation within which your research is conducted. Their categorisation highlights the variety of research which can be considered within the insider action research approach, which they perceive as a continuum which “reflects the intended focus of the researcher for both researcher and system” (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014, p.123).

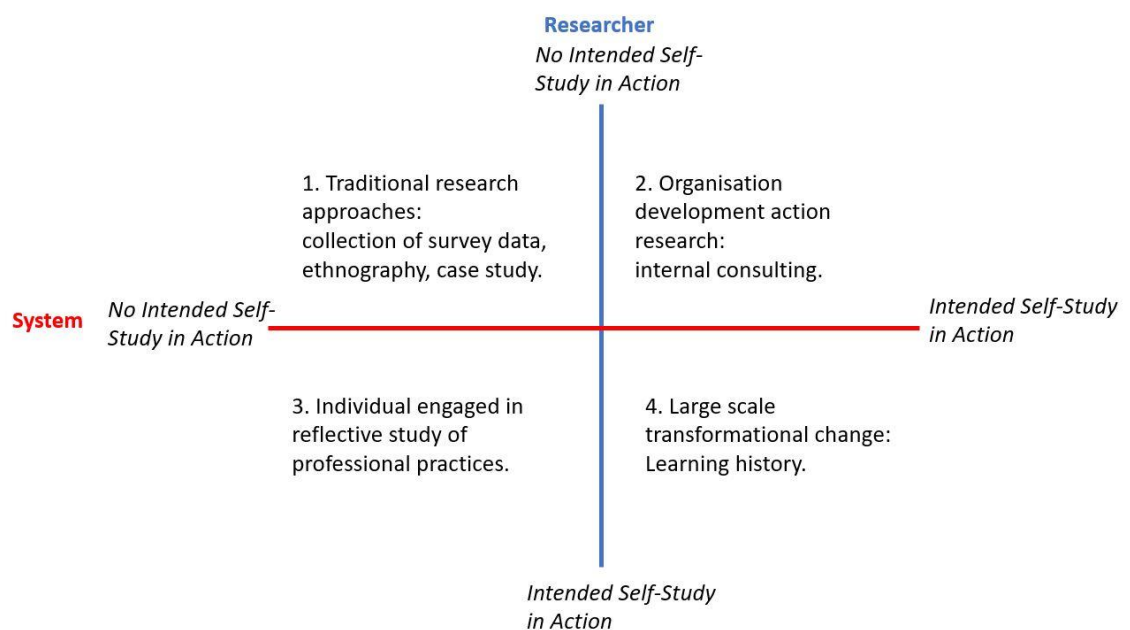


Figure 8: Positionality in Action Research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014)

I align this research project with quadrant three of Coghlan and Brannicks’ (2014) matrix. This research project was inspired by my desire to improve my practice allowing me to deepen my reflection and engage in professional development, and so I position myself as an insider in this research project. The institution in which this research took place

facilitated this research, but did not actively take part, supporting my alignment with quadrant three. However, the outcomes from this project contribute to professional development and progression of teaching for critical global learning within the institution and the wider research and educational field.

5.5.2.1 Self-Study Action Research

I undertook self-study action research, which is adopted by practitioners interested in studying their own practice with the aim of improving their practice, their understanding of it, and sharing research outcomes. Rather than exploring a topic in the abstract or researching from a distance, self-study research places the researcher at the centre of the inquiry they choose to explore (Samaras, 2011). While the motivation for engaging in self-study action research related to my students' learning outcomes and I involved them in data collection, it was important to retain a research focus on observing and reflecting on my teaching, rather than simply studying my students. As highlighted by Roche (2016, p.29) "my pupils could be the mirror in which I saw my practise reflected, but I needed to see that I was researching 'me': my thoughts, my ideas, my solutions to problems, my actions, decisions and plans". Samaras (2011) positions the self-study teacher researcher as the 'generator of knowledge', highlighting the significance of being able to improve and change our own practices.

Engaging in self-study research is a form of professional development for educators. Samaras (2011) positions this work as a lifelong process, reminding us that as educators we can engage our skills in questioning, reflecting and ultimately acting to improve our practices. As a research process, self-study enabled me to identify what was working well within my practice and where there were opportunities for further exploration. Rather than shying away from problems in your practice, self-study allows you to openly ask questions and embark on a process of discovery to identify solutions (Samaras, 2011). Self-study enables us to generate knowledge and theory about the broader field of teaching based on our lived experiences. Loughran (2008) posits that educators' knowledge is a crucial source for improving teaching practices, and highlights that this knowledge base is largely untapped.

Self-study action research is not an abstract concept, rather it is a living process concerned with real-life experiences (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). The ‘living theory’ approach to action research requires the researcher to place the ‘living I’ at the centre of their research, and practice an openness to experiencing yourself as a ‘living contradiction’ (Whitehead, 1989). Through self-reflection and increased observation of personal practices, I was able to identify where my values were not reflected in my practices, noticing contradictions previously unseen, identifying my own ‘living contradictions’, which are reflected in the challenges outlined in my findings in Chapters Six and Eight. It is not an easy process to embark on, requiring courage to engage with a level of openness that leads to such realisations. Highlighting this challenge, Roche (2016, p.29) said the process of self-study action research is much less linear than other research approaches, and compared it at times to “nailing jelly to a tree”. Ultimately, though challenging, this approach enables teacher researchers to “create living personal theories that have current relevance” (McDonagh, 2020, p.135).

Drawing on two decades of work from self-study scholars, Samaras (2011, p.10) presents a framework of the methodological components of self-study, including:

1. Personal situated inquiry;
2. Critical collaborative inquiry;
3. Improved learning;
4. A transparent and systematic research process;
5. Knowledge generation and presentation.

Samaras’ (2011) conceptualisation of self-study necessitates engagement with colleagues and research participants, and requires the researcher to draw on sources of knowledge beyond themselves. Although self-study action research is a process of examining personal practice, it is not done alone. Russell (2008, p.5) highlights that it is “not the private and personal affair that the label might suggest”. Rather, self-study is done in communication with colleagues and students (Russell, 2008; Samaras, 2011; McDonagh et al., 2020). While self-study legitimises the knowledge educators can generate based on their own practices, the knowledge generated through self-study research is as a result of consultation and critical conversations with colleagues (Russell, 2008). My inquiry into my own

practices was undertaken alongside support and engagement from critical friends, my students, colleagues, and my supervisors.

5.5.3 The Participation Question for Action Research

One of the ways in which different action research traditions can be distinguished from each other is by the level of involvement of research participants in all stages of the research project (Creswell, 2014; Herr and Anderson, 2015). In this way, collaborative action research, more commonly referred to as participatory action research (PAR) can be contrasted with practitioner action research, also referred to as practical action research (Creswell, 2014). There is a strong tradition of participatory or collaborative action research within education.

Traditionally, undertaking PAR involves the inclusion of participants in all phases of the research process, including the design, execution, and generation of results (Vollman et al., 2004). Baum et al. (2006) acknowledge that the extent to which this participation is possible is heavily dependent on practical considerations as well as on the willingness of participants to be involved at that level. In contrast, within practical action research, educators' self-understandings and judgements are considered the dominant form of knowledge creation (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, p.561) situate practical action research as Aristotelian in its approach to practical reasoning regarding "how to act rightly and properly in a situation with which one is confronted".

The practical and ethical considerations of the research setting informed my decision-making process in relation to levels of participant participation appropriate for this study. As a result of challenges in relation to high student numbers and time constraints for students, as outlined in section 5.3, this research did not have a participatory element in the way PAR traditionally does. My students, as research participants, were not co-researchers involved in the design and analysis stages of research. However, in other ways the research project was highly participatory. As a self-study, this research explored my own practices as a teacher educator in what is a highly participatory field. GE is often characterised by active and participatory teaching which was reflected in my own approaches. Consequently, I knew the students who contributed to this research well and their participation in data collection was very participatory both during and outside of class time

and reflected the relationship we had established and the interactive way in which we communicated during classes. While students did not contribute directly to design or analysis, they offered their own reflections and considered ideas through the data collection which contributed to the generation of knowledge about the phenomenon being explored. Choosing a research methodology which was not participatory in the traditional sense afforded students the opportunity to be involved and have their voices heard while not placing additional time or workload related pressures on them.

5.6 Data Collection

Data collection followed a concurrent mixed-methods design. Concurrent designs are used when both quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, analysed separately and then the results of both are merged to identify findings (Creswell and Zhang, 2009). Although both forms of data are often given equal emphasis in a study (Creswell and Zhang, 2009), depending on the theoretical drive behind the research question, one form of data can be afforded more weight than the other (Morse, 2010). Due to the inductive, interpretive nature of the research question, the approach to data collection employed within this research study was “QUAL + quant”. This typology is used by Morse (2010, p.341) to distinguish between different approaches to mixed methods research depending on the emphasis placed on different forms of data and the order of collection. The phrasing indicates that the qualitative data was the main form of data collected, and that it was also given more emphasis in the generation of findings. Quantitative data was collected as a supplement to the core qualitative data.

Originally, I planned to collect only qualitative data in the form of interviews, class tasks and reflections. However, upon realising that this provided me with information from a small selection of students within each group, I decided to introduce surveys which included closed questions in order to ensure I was capturing feedback from a wider range of students. The purpose of the quantitative data, collected using closed questions in the surveys, was to allow me to engage in a comparative exercise in order to ascertain whether the quantitative data, from a larger student cohort, would confirm or contradict the qualitative data collected from a smaller cohort of students. While no major statistical analysis was employed, this approach contributed to the validity of findings.

Multiple approaches to data collection were employed throughout the three action research cycles. Data collection methods were chosen to help capture not only what was happening in practice, but to try and understand what was working or not in the classroom, and why that might have been so. This approach is typical within the field of action research, as outlined by Patton (2002, p.221) who posits that within action research “the research methods tend to be less systematic, more informal, and quite specific to the problem, people and organisation for which the research is undertaken”.

Table 4 below details the data collection methods used in each cycle, which will be further explained later in the chapter. In addition to those featured in the Table, I also engaged in reflection and conversations with critical friends on a continual basis throughout the three cycles.

| | Cycle 1 (group A) | Cycle 2 (groups B and C) | Cycle 3 (groups D and E) |
|--|---|--|--|
| Focus group interviews | 3 FG1: 6 participants FG2: 5 participants FG3: 3 participants | 4 (1 per group per semester) Group B FG1: 4 participants FG2: 4 participants Group C FG1: 4 participants FG2: 4 participants | 6 (4 from one group, 2 from the other) Group D FG1: 3 participants FG2: 4 participants FG3: 2 participants FG4: 1 participant Group E FG1: 11 participants FG2: 3 participants |
| End of semester surveys | 20 | Group B Sem 1: 46 Group B Sem 2: 14 Group C Sem 1: 53 Group C Sem 2: 15 | Group D: 47 Group E: 51 |
| Most significant change stories | 13 | Group B Sem 1: 46 Group B Sem 2: 14 Group C Sem 1: 53 Group C Sem 2: 15 | Group D: 47 Group E: 51 |
| Evidence from students' work | Exit slips: 2 sessions, 32 responses from each. Task: Session 1: 8 group responses. Session 2: 10 group responses. Assessments: 47 | Exit slips: 3 sessions per group, 30-59 responses each. Tasks: 7 sessions per group, 7-14 group responses each. Assessments: Group B: 51 each semester. Group C: 59 each semester. | Exit slips: 3 sessions per group, 14-51 responses each. Tasks: 7 sessions per group, 4-14 group responses each. Assessments: Group D: 44 Group E: 45 |

Table 4: Quantity and Type of Data Collected Within this Study

5.6.1 Sampling

I employed purposive sampling to identify participants for this study. As previously outlined, data collection during cycle one took place with one of the seven second year groups, while in cycles two and three, there were two groups of students involved. Within each year of the B.Ed. programme there is one group that has students from a variety of

backgrounds including students who entered the programme through both traditional and non-traditional routes³. In each cycle of data collection, I chose to work with this group as I felt they would provide the greatest variety of perspectives and experiences. However, following cycle one, it became apparent that I also needed to include an additional group of students to better capture the more typical student experience. In cycles two and three, the second group were chosen at random based on timetabling. I selected a group who were also scheduled for GE lectures on the same day as the first group to allow me to confine in-class data collection to one day per week.

5.6.2 Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews were conducted throughout all three action research cycles. Focus group interviews were selected as a core methodology allowing me to assess where there was consensus or disagreement among students in relation to their experiences of the modules. Group interviews allow participants to contribute personal perspectives, while being “stimulated by thoughts and comments of others in the group” (Robson, 2011, p.294). The flexible and conversational style of focus group interviews, where participants were already familiar and comfortable with one another, allowed for rich debates and discussions to take place. The focus group format allowed students to react to, support, and contradict each other, leading to richer data than might have been collected through individual interviews. This is in line with what Patton (2011, p.386) cites as the object of the focus group interview: “to get high quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others”.

During class times students were offered the invitation to participate in focus groups which would take place outside of class time. Students were assured that participation was optional. Inviting students during class time often led to friendship groups signing up collectively to participate which led to rich discussions amongst students already familiar

³ Non-traditional entry routes included: mature students, students who were repeating the year, students who had moved to the B.Ed. from a different course, students who had permission to begin the course later than other students in their first year.

and comfortable with one another. Often the friendship groups who signed up for focus groups were comfortable disagreeing with and challenging one another, which enriched the data by deepening their reflections and responses. Additionally, there were two students in cycle one and three students in cycle two, who attended all the focus groups in their cycle. There were also many students who attended only one focus group in their cycle resulting in distinct groups each time. The repetition of participants in focus groups and an awareness of the consequent limited numbers of students engaging in this method was a factor which led me to develop additional data collection methods including surveys.

In order to facilitate students' timetables, interviews lasted between thirty and sixty minutes. Occasionally, students were so engrossed in the topic being discussed that they had to be reminded to rush to their next class. We met in meeting rooms and classrooms that were familiar to them but secluded from busy areas to ensure privacy. I provided students with refreshments during each interview as I was conscious that we often met during their break times. The making of tea and coffee often broke the ice at the beginning of interviews and ensured the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly from the outset, an atmosphere I worked to maintain throughout.

Patton (2002) recommends that focus groups take place with between six and ten people. While I aimed for this level, numbers were dictated by student availability and interest levels. As was seen in Table 4 earlier in this chapter, numbers ranged from one to eleven participants, with most interviews taking place with three or four participants. Within cycle three, focus groups on the same theme were offered more than once to allow for scheduling conflicts of students wishing to take part.

Prior to beginning the project, I planned to conduct five focus group interviews on different themes within each cycle (Appendix C). However, it quickly became apparent during cycle one that student availability and interest meant this would not be possible. I amended my schedule for cycle one to include only three focus group interviews, and two per group for cycles two and three. This allowed me to gather data at the outset and the conclusion of the each of those cycles. Focus groups followed a semi-structured approach. Each interview had a theme, evident in Table 5, which was shared with the participants prior to conducting the interviews. When I altered the original schedule of interviews, I consolidated the original themes I identified into the new schedule (Table 5). I wanted to

ensure that each group were being asked the same questions, while still retaining the naturally conversational and informal nature of the focus group interview. I used interview guides to ensure that I was following the same basic questions with each group (Appendix D). Patton (2002) maintains that using an interview guide allows the interviewer to remain focused on identified topics while remaining free to explore, probe and ask follow-up questions. Furthermore, he (ibid, p.344) cites the benefit of interview guides, stating that it “keeps the interactions focused while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge”.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----|
| Cycle 1 | Group A | FG1 | FG2 | FG3 | |
| Cycle 2 | Group B | FG1 | | FG2 | |
| | Group C | FG1 | | FG2 | |
| Cycle 3 | Group D | FG1 | FG2 | FG3 | FG4 |
| | Group E | FG1 | | FG2 | |
| | | | | | |
| Themes | Understanding of critical thinking | Complexity of language | Implications for personal and professional lives from module | Reflecting on modules | |

Table 5: Schedule of Focus Group Themes

Throughout the process of gathering data through focus group interviews, I endeavoured to remain fluid in my approach and be responsive to student circumstances and engagement levels. This is evident in the way my original plans were altered: participant numbers, interview schedules and themes were all adapted in response to student availability and engagement levels. However, it also became clear during data collection that the voices represented in focus group interviews were those of students who were enthusiastic about the subject matter and so I was missing input from students who may have had different perspectives. Robson (2011) cites this as a commonly found disadvantage of focus group

interviews, that the results can be difficult to generalise as participants may not be representative of the broader group. As a result, I broadened my original data collection plans to include surveys which were distributed to all students and offered the opportunity to complete them during class time.

5.6.3 End of Semester Surveys

Surveys are a straightforward and simple method which enable researchers to gather data on attitudes, values, beliefs and motives quickly from participants (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, Robson (2011) advocates for the use of surveys as they allow participants to retain anonymity which can encourage greater levels of honesty than face-to-face methods would. As previously outlined, surveys were included in order to capture the perspectives of a wider range of students than those who were participating in the focus group interviews. Surveys were distributed to students during class time at the end of each module. Completion of the surveys was optional, this was highlighted in both the written consent forms (Appendix E) and was reiterated verbally when they were distributed. As class time was allocated for completion of surveys there was full participation from students in attendance at the relevant classes. Additionally, it is standard practice across all modules and groups to allow time at the end of a module to gather feedback from students, so students were not asked to do anything more taxing than other groups of students not involved in the research process, they simply had a different survey to complete.

I used the surveys as an opportunity to collect data from a wider range of students than had engaged with focus groups, but also used them as a tool to gather evidence of students demonstrating critical global learning skills. Questions were developed in line with the skills from the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* developed as part of this research and in relation to the research question an aim. Consequently, in Appendix F survey questions relate both to evidence of students demonstrating or identifying a change in their skill levels as well as students experience of the module including the opportunities and barriers which impacted on their learning.

While seeking to collect data on a broad range of topics, I also aimed to ensure that the length of the survey was not off-putting to students. Surveys included a mixture of closed and open-ended questions to ensure I could capture information on a wide range of

questions within a short period of time. Additionally, closed questions could be completed quickly, and even students uninterested in answering open-ended questions completed this quick task on the survey, meaning that I was able to capture some data from students who had previously not engaged with the research. Closed questions represented the quantitative data collection I employed and were constructed using statements that could be ranked on a Likert scale. Mertler (2017) advocates for the use of rating scales to quickly and effectively capture participants' attitudes and perceptions.

Prior to administering the surveys, I piloted them with the two critical friends who were supporting me in the research project. This is recommended by Robson (2011) who identifies piloting as a key phase, which allows the researcher to then adapt and alter the survey in response to feedback before undertaking the survey with the intended participants.

5.6.4 Most Significant Change Stories

Most significant change stories (MSCSs) offer participants an opportunity to select and present their own stories of change and to identify the process which led to their identified significant change. As a methodology, it offers a departure from more conventional approaches, and requires participants to be creative and reflective in their responses (Dart and Davies, 2003). Traditionally used in the international development field, MSCSs have been found to be particularly useful as an evaluation tool for participatory programmes with diverse and complex objectives (Dart and Davies, 2003). Conceptually, this approach added an additional dimension to data collection, and connected strongly with the action research approach as it focused on capturing change.

Initially, I had planned to implement the MSCSs methodology as outlined by Davies (1996), which involved identifying the domains of change, gathering the stories and then engaging in a process of feedback with students to discuss the stories further and select the 'most significant' ones. Although I successfully collected stories from students in cycle one, due to the limitations identified in the focus group interview process which emerged in cycle one, it was not possible to engage in the final element as students were not available to attend additional focus group sessions. Therefore, I employed an altered version of this methodology by removing the discussion step and retaining all significant

stories collected. During the following two cycles, I felt that there was still value in collecting the stories of change and so the same template (Appendix G) was included within the end-of-semester surveys and students had the opportunity to complete them during classes.

I drew on personal reflections, conversations with critical friends, and a relevant literature review to identify relevant domains of change to look for through MSCSs. I then created a template to capture the MSCSs (Appendix G). The template provided a series of guided questions for the students to consider and asked them to highlight not only what changes they experienced but also when they noticed the change, and what influenced these changes. Sweeney and Heck (2013) implemented this methodology in a teacher education setting and found that it successfully complemented the other data collection techniques they employed by providing contextual evidence which aided in better understanding other data collected. I employed MSCSs to capture key moments and learning and to enable students to summarise their experience of the modules as a whole. These stories provided a useful comparison to the data generated through other methods.

5.6.5 Evidence from Students' Work

As outlined in Table 4, evidence from students' work consisted of tasks, exit-slips and assessments. The collection of data from in-class tasks provided evidence of students' engagement with tasks designed to foster critical thinking and enabled triangulation with other data sources. Sullivan (2020) lists extracts from learners work as a component of the data cache that can be generated in action research studies related to teaching. She (ibid) highlights that this form of data can be useful for identifying where practises have been enhanced or where there is additional work to do. While placing greater emphasis on other methods such as interviews, reflections and engagement with critical friends, Sullivan (2020) still contends that this form of data can support triangulation for the generation of findings.

Due to the disparity between students' reported and demonstrated skill levels of critical thinking, it was important for me to have a combination of data which included both student reporting on their experiences (interviews, surveys, MSCSs, exit slips) and observational evidence of their skills and dispositions in practice (collection of in-class

tasks, assessments, reflection, conversations with critical friends who also taught the module or observed my teaching). Arguably, interviews, surveys and MSCSs also provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their critical thinking skills, thus providing the evidence I sought. However, these methods included explicit prompts which caused students to be highly aware of demonstrating their criticality. This was not the case for in-class tasks, where students engaged with activities individually and in groups as a normal part of their learning. This enabled me to collect data in relation to demonstrated criticality in a more authentic situation.

While assessments from all students who had given written consent to partake in data collection were anonymised and retained for analysis, engagement in in-class data collection was entirely voluntary and permission was continually sought. Though students had submitted written permission through completion of consent forms (Appendix E), I also asked for verbal consent each time I collected data. When there was something physical to submit, such as work sheets or post-it notes, I asked students to submit them if they were happy for their written work to contribute to data collection, or to retain them if not. If submitting, I encouraged students to first photograph their work for their own records. Where there were physical items completed at their desks, such as ranking or other activities using physical materials, I asked students to leave them on display if they were happy for me to photograph them for data collection or to put them away if not. In the final cycle of data collection, I used mini-whiteboards in many activities throughout the module. Where students were happy for me to capture their answers, I asked them to leave the whiteboards untouched, or to wipe clean if not. At all stages, students were reminded of the purpose of the data collection and referred back to the information sheet (Appendix H) that they received at the outset of the module. In each instance, the majority of students volunteered their completed activities for data collection.

In addition to collecting evidence from work undertaken during class time, I also used 'exit slips' to gather feedback from students in relation to specific methodologies or sessions. Sometimes the format for this was open, where students could choose how to respond, at other times I provided them with paper slips asking three questions:

- Did this session help you develop your critical thinking skills?

- If so, how?
- How could this session have been improved?

This approach was useful in helping me to formulate the changes I would make to the module and individual sessions prior to subsequent cycles.

5.6.6 Reflection

As noted in the description of action research, reflection is an integral part of the action research cycle and also a critical data collection technique. Recording reflections and observations of practice has a number of benefits, chiefly it provides an opportunity to collect data in situations where other forms of data will not work (Mertler, 2017). Mertler (2017) declared that one of the benefits of utilising reflection and observation as a data collection technique is that it enables practitioners to gather data about actual learner behaviour in place of asking learners to self-report on their perceptions or feelings. This approach allows the teacher researcher to notice and record data which learners might not be aware of or able to report themselves. In this way, its purpose is similar to that of gathering evidence from class activities, however, reflections and observations generated by the teacher researcher enables them to consider the broader context of the whole group, whole module, or further societal or cultural contexts that might offer a further layer to the data.

I engaged in reflection in a number of ways throughout the three cycles of data collection. At the outset, I developed a set of simple questions (Appendix I) to guide my reflections and narrow the focus of what I recorded to ensure it was relevant to the overall project. However, as time went on, I became more comfortable with the process and was better able to identify the moments or ideas of value without the aid of the guiding questions. Mertler (2017, p.131) reassures researchers that this is common in action research stating that “as you observe and record what you see, you will undoubtedly begin to focus on things that are interesting or important”. Although aiming at the outset to follow a rigorous schedule for reflecting, I found that I naturally followed a more organic approach. I recorded experiences and observations which I deemed to be important, but left out other experiences that I deemed irrelevant to the aim of the research. I also used a variety of approaches in recording my ideas. I hand wrote, typed and audio recorded ideas and

observations interchangeably throughout all three cycles. I used the method which was most accessible to me in the moment I needed to record my thoughts. I followed guidelines from McNiff (2017) and often used my driving time to and from work as thinking time and recorded audio notes. I focused my reflections not only on what I noticed during classes, but also in relation to my experience as a teacher educator, noting my own evaluations on methodologies or teaching approaches. I was then able to triangulate these with the feedback from students gathered through other methods. Although they became more fluid over time, the focus of my reflections remained on my practices as a teacher educator.

5.6.7 Engagement with Critical Friends

Although it might sound like a contradiction, engaging in self-study research requires collaborating with others, i.e. critical friends (Samaras, 2011). A critical friend is usually a colleague or peer who engages in debriefing conversations with the researcher. Critical friends pose challenging questions and help to push researcher understanding to another level (Herr and Anderson, 2015). Furthermore, critical friends can offer alternative insights into challenging situations and can help the researcher to reframe interpretations in light of their different perspectives (Samaras, 2011).

Palmer (1997, p.12) contends that if we want to grow as educators, “we must talk to each other about our inner lives”. This assertion is mirrored by Andrew et al. (2016, p.293) who posit that “having a critical friend who can be trusted with your insecurities and failures can help you to uncover elements of your practices that you may not see on your own”. For the purposes of this research, I engaged with two critical friends who served different purposes. While both critical friends were colleagues and peers, they were also friends. This meant that I was comfortable sharing personal anecdotes with them and telling them about my fears, not shying away from any failures or feelings of insecurity that emerged. This depth in our conversations allowed us to talk about the broader context of who I am as a teacher educator and how my practice could be influenced by my personal experiences and not only what was visible or measurable in the classroom.

One of the critical friends who I engaged with was a teacher educator who worked with me on the modules this research focused on. While I designed the module and wrote the content for lectures each week, we shared the teaching. We had regular discussions on a

weekly, and sometimes daily basis in relation to the content, delivery style and issues that were emerging in the classroom. Engagement with her as a critical friend added a new dimension to data collection as she had a unique insight into the module in question. She also has significant experience teaching GE and so could offer valuable insights into the content and delivery of sessions. Sometimes I would record our conversations, with consent, and other times I would record my reflections following our conversations. She also wrote her own reflections and shared them with me throughout the three cycles. As the project progressed, I shared findings with her as they emerged and incorporated her feedback into my writing. This brought an additional level of reliability to the findings, as she was able to confirm or challenge them, and I could ensure what I presented reflected our shared experience of the process.

The second critical friend who I engaged with is a colleague who does not teach GE. As part of my professional development I engage with peer observation sessions with this colleague each semester. This peer observation process focuses on teaching methodologies. This critical friend has observed my teaching over a number of years, including throughout the three cycles of data collection for this project, and so was able to offer insights on my approach as a teacher educator and observed changes throughout the three cycles. With consent, I recorded many of our conversations that arose following the peer observation sessions in which she observed my teaching. As her involvement with the module and research topic was infrequent, I also provided her with a focused observation check list (Appendix J). The observation checklist included elements of my *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning and Planning Tool* as it evolved and sought feedback on evidence of its effectiveness in my teaching. The use of this list ensured that her feedback would focus on elements of my practice that related directly to my research question, and thus also provided opportunities for triangulation with other data collection methods.

Both critical friends lived up to the description outlined by Samaras (2011, p.5) who maintains that “critical friends are trusted colleagues who seek support and validation of their research to gain new perspectives in understanding and reframing of their interpretations”. They were both invaluable throughout the research process. As friends and colleagues, I knew they were invested in my practice and shared my motivation to see my practice improve. They both challenged me and on numerous occasions provided keen

insights and alternative perspectives on situations which I found challenging throughout the process. Ultimately, they helped me to “problematize the taken-for-granted aspects” of my practice (Herr and Anderson, 2015, p.39).

5.7 Data Analysis

As the data collection in this action research project is cyclical, it was crucial to first establish what McNiff (2017) refers to as ‘value-as-criterion’ before engaging with the steps of analysis. McNiff (2017) defines ‘value-as-criterion’ as the crucial elements you initially look for in your data to guide your familiarisation process. Establishing the crucial elements allowed for emergent and tentative findings to be established in a short timeframe between cycles to inform further action research cycles. After each cycle the most important ‘value-as-criterion’ I looked for were ‘what worked well’ and ‘what needs to change’ with respect to evidence of students’ critical thinking informed by the skillset from Chapter Four.

5.7.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

I used a computer programme called NVivo to aid in the data organisation and analysis process of the qualitative data set. The use of qualitative data analysis software allows for “almost limitless possibilities for review, sorting, sifting, combination, and comparison of text segments” once coding has been completed (Bazeley, 2009, p.435). In this way NVivo was used as a data organisational tool which streamlined the process of analysis significantly. However, analysis of qualitative data remains a human, interpretive task.

I analysed my qualitative data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method which provides core skills for conducting qualitative analysis and versions of this approach are used across multiple qualitative analysis processes (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Ultimately, thematic analysis is concerned with identifying ideas and themes that emerge repeatedly from the data and affords researchers the opportunity to “link the various concepts and opinions of the learners and compare these with the data that has been gathered in different situations at different times during the project” (Alhojailan, 2012, p.40). As I was using multiple methods to gather data from different participants and in different formats (written, photographic, audio) thematic analysis offered a flexible

approach to analysis which supported me in interpreting the data in an accurate and reliable manner.

The qualitative data analysis employed within this study followed the steps for reflexive thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2020b). Originally conceptualised as thematic analysis in 2006, Braun and Clarke published updated guidelines in 2020. They (ibid) detail a six-phase process of engaging in reflexive thematic analysis. This process allows the researcher to move from the descriptive to the interpretive so that the researcher works through the data multiple times allowing for increased familiarity leading to interpretation. While providing guidance on what should be done during each phase of data analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006, 2020a) reassure researchers that as they become familiar with the steps, the lines between the phases blur, and the phases blend together somewhat as multiple phases are completed simultaneously. Furthermore, they (ibid) outline that the process is not necessarily linear, but iterative as researchers move back and forth between the phases.

I analysed each of the three cycles of data separately and followed the six phases, in much the same way, each time. While not always completing all six phases prior to the beginning of the following cycle of data collection, I was able to use the emerging findings to inform subsequent cycles. Conscious of the guidance provided by Braun and Clarke in both their original (2006) conceptualisation of thematic analysis process and their revised model in 2020, I outline below how I approached each phase of analysis.

Phase 1 - Data familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes.

To familiarise myself with my data I listened multiple times to the audio data I had collected through interviews and reflections, including in my office, car and while walking using headphones. I also read, re-read and digitised the physical data I had collected through surveys and materials from classroom activities. During this phase of data analysis, I kept notes in relation to the key concepts and interesting moments that I was identifying. My immersion in the data facilitated me in generating initial codes (Appendix K). During this phase, I was also looking out for instances in the data which related to the value-as-criterion (McNiff, 2017), which I had identified from the outset. The combination of focused listening for my established 'value-as-criterion' and unbiased listening which

led to the generation of emerging codes allowed me to become familiar with the data during each cycle and use this knowledge to inform planning for the upcoming data collection cycle.

Phase 2 - Systematic data coding.

During phase one, I had imported all qualitative data into Nvivo, which enabled me to begin coding during phase two. Coding involves identifying features within the data that appear interesting to the analyst and relate to the most basic segments of the raw data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An example of a coded extract from the data can be seen in Appendix L.

During this phase of analysis, I engaged in two forms of coding: deductive and inductive. Initially I deductively coded each piece of data against the emergent codes from phase one, and also codes that related to the value-as-criterion I had established. Secondly, I engaged in inductive open coding. Braun and Clarke (2020a, p.3) confirm that thematic analysis has “the potential for inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) orientations to coding”.

Phase 3 - Generating initial themes from coded and collated data.

Having generated extensive codes during phase two, I printed the code books and cut them up in order to group them into themes. While the software could have supported this phase, laying out the large number of codes across a table allowed me to appreciate the data anew. Additionally, being able to see all the codes at the same time ensured that I retained a comprehensive, holistic overview of the project rather than getting focused on one aspect over another.

When the codes were laid out I began to identify themes. I grouped codes together where I identified connections and was able to physically arrange and rearrange the codes as I attempted to identify and name relevant themes. In Appendix M I have shared photographs of this process.

Phase 4 - Developing and reviewing themes.

During this phase I returned to using the NVivo software. I was able to link, connect and at times collapse themes that I had already identified when I noted where there were overlaps or where the data did not support the theme I had generated. As I was using the software during this phase I was also able to identify where themes were drawing from multiple data sources or where they were limited to only one. As recommended by Braun and Clark (2006), during this phase I also re-familiarised myself with the data by re-listening and rereading to ensure that the themes I had identified accurately reflected the data set as a whole. While revisiting the data I was able to identify additional areas of the data that could be coded to support themes where relevant. This is common practice in thematic analysis where coding should be involved throughout all phases while moving back and forth within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2020b).

Phase 5 - Refining, defining, and naming themes.

Conscious of my value-as-criterion during this phase, I generated thematic frameworks where I mapped the themes and codes I had generated from the data on to the overarching questions that I wanted to answer through this research. I created three thematic maps (Appendix N). Firstly, I generated one which allowed me to easily identify what was working well, then a second one that identified what was not working well and where there was evidence for that, and a final thematic map which connected codes and themes to the core skills and disposition from Chapter Four. The generation of these three thematic maps allowed me to identify evidence of success, recognise areas for improvement and facilitated me in interrogating the evolving skillset for the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*.

Phase 6 - Writing the report.

I used the core skills, disposition and considerations in relation to outcomes identified in Chapter Four as a structure through which to present my findings. In doing so, I have been able to identify and present instances where there was success and areas for improvement in supporting students to develop these skills. Findings from cycles one and two are presented side by side as together they informed the development of a *Planning Tool*

which was implemented in cycle three. Findings from cycle three are presented in Chapter Eight. When presenting findings from all three cycles, data from multiple sources and different cycles are used to triangulate my findings.

5.7.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

As outlined earlier in this chapter, the quantitative data which was gathered from responses to Likert scales within the surveys was minimal and served the purpose of validating or challenging the findings from the predominant qualitative data. The decision to place different levels of emphasis on different data sets in mixed methods research is validated by Creswell and Zhang (2009, p.613). Thus, analysis in relation to the quantitative data was less formal than the approach to analysing qualitative data. I collated the numerical data that I had collected in each cycle, and used Excel tools to compare data and generate graphs and other figures to present quantitative findings (examples in Appendix P). The graphs were then used for side-by-side comparison with the qualitative data in order to reveal where quantitative data supported findings from qualitative analysis or where there were contradictions or anomalies. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) outline that side-by-side comparison of two distinct quantitative and qualitative data sets allow both sets of data to dissolve and be used interchangeably to present findings. This approach to mixed methods data analysis allows data from the less significant data set to be used to confirm or challenge results from the predominant data set (Creswell and Zhang, 2009).

5.7.3 Validity and Reliability within Action Research

Within action research, the knowledge generated is contextual and emergent. Consequently, the findings presented will always have a conditional quality to them, which reflects the messiness of real life and the localised nature of action research (Coleman, 2019). While replicability and generalisability are no longer considered appropriate criteria for action research due to its contextual nature (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002; Herr and Anderson, 2015; McDonagh, 2016; Coleman, 2019), it is still important to be able to demonstrate rigour and reliable evidence for claims made. As with all research, action researchers claim that as a result of the research undertaken, they now know more than they did before. McNiff (2002, p.102) defines validity as “people agreeing that what you say is believable”.

Making our research public and open to critique is one method for testing reliability and credibility of our research process and claims (McDonagh, 2016). Throughout the process of research design, data collection, analysis, and write up I presented at a number of conferences. These included conferences focused on GE, on education more broadly, and those with a specific focus on action research which drew academics from myriad fields. Sharing my research in its infancy required me to enter a very vulnerable space as I presented my early interpretations and ideas as I developed them. However, each time I made my research public and opened myself up to critique from my peers, I learned something new. I was presented with questions, divergent ways of thinking, and critiques that I was able to subsequently build into my research design, data collection, and presentation of findings. Through sharing my research publicly at such early stages, I had the opportunity to learn from others in the field with more experience both as practitioners and researchers about routes that I could take, as well as questions I should consider. Changes I made as a result of engaging with conferences included alterations to the structure of the model, the inclusion of additional authors and considerations within my literature review, and the inclusion of additional considerations in relation to my findings. Additionally, all of the conferences I presented at included a peer review stage during the application process. Being accepted to present at these conferences gave a level of validity to my project and the proposals I had written.

A further measure of validity common in research is the use of triangulation to contrast, compare and validate results (Patton, 2002; Robson, 2011; McDonagh, 2016). As previously mentioned, when I outlined my data collection techniques, I built in opportunities for triangulation of findings. I employed a wide variety of data collection methods across three cycles of action research. This allowed me the opportunity to compare findings across data sources both within and across cycles. I did not track individual students' contributions and so cannot make claims about changes I observed from individuals. However, I have been able to triangulate data generated by multiple methods to confidently make claims that represent the broader group. Additionally, I used quantitative data, generated by a broader group, to check where there was alignment or divergence from the qualitative data, generated by a smaller number of students. McDonagh (2016, p.107) advocates for the use of a variety of triangulation approaches to support researchers in validating the accuracy of their findings. Additionally, she (ibid)

declares that triangulation provides action researchers with innovative approaches to analysis and demonstrates an openness to critique and challenge. Finally, I also engaged in member checking with both of my critical friends as I analysed and worked towards presenting my findings. Their feedback was incorporated into the presentation of my findings and contributes to their validity as they reflect our shared interpretations. I was unable to engage in member checking with any students as I no longer had access to them once they finished my modules.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

Engaging in research that involves human subjects demands ethical awareness, both out of respect for participants and obligations to the institutions and fields in which we work (McNiff, 2017). Before beginning data collection, I gained ethical approval through the University of Glasgow. Additionally, as the research was to be undertaken in the institution in which I work, I also applied and was granted institutional approval. In my role as a teacher researcher I was also conscious that ethics were not just a consideration during the research design and approval phase, but related to a set of behaviours I endeavoured to embody throughout the study. Costley and Fulton (2019) consider research ethics to be more akin to a conscious mindset than a strict set of procedures. Embracing ethical behaviours is of particular importance when the researcher is closely connected to the research context, as in the case of this project, which necessitates that the researcher act with integrity (Costley and Fulton, 2019).

Nolen and Putten (2007) encourage action researchers to consider how they will protect the rights and freedoms of learners, and how they will remain accountable for their responsibilities as both practitioners and researchers. Due to the nature of practitioner research, the dependent relationship between learners and the teacher researcher is a critical ethical consideration (Scotland, 2012). The dependent relationship can lead learners to feel obligated to participate and could bring the credibility of the data into question as learners may offer answers out of a desire to please their teacher, rather than out of honesty (Nolen and Putten, 2007). Secondly, given that this research examines my own practices as a teacher educator, it was of critical importance that I remained mindful of my personal biases and took steps to ensure a level of objectivity when interpreting data and reporting

findings. This was done through sharing, and being conscious of, my personal journey to becoming a teacher educator and engaging with critical friends throughout all stages of design, data collection, analysis and presentation.

The Belmont report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) aimed to address unethical research practices. This study follows the principles outlined within that report in attempting to mitigate the impacts of the dependent relationships and researcher bias. The report (1979) names respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as the three central principles for ethical research. Specific steps taken to reduce risk which are in line with the principles of ethical research included:

Consent: All potential participants were given written information sheets (Appendix H) and consent forms (Appendix E). Additionally, verbal conversations in relation to the research were ongoing and verbal consent was continually sought.

Anonymity: Students were assured of their anonymity through written information sheets and verbal confirmation.

Awareness of dependent relationships: I ensured that students knew that their choice to participate or not would not impact on their learning experience, or relationship with me as their lecturer. I reassured them of this both verbally, and through my actions in ensuring that I was consistently open with students and available for support. During each cycle there were students who did not participate in data collection with no impact to their learning.

Flexible approach to data collection: I was mindful of and responsive to students' wellbeing throughout the project. This is evidenced in the alterations I made to data collection methods in response to student availability and the provision of refreshments for students contributing to focus group interviews during their break times.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methodological decisions made within my self-study action research project which took place across three academic years. As highlighted, McNiff and Whitehead (2002, p.13) conceptualise this approach to research as “a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning”. I demonstrated in this chapter the ways in which my research has remained true to this conceptualisation. The methodological decisions I made, including the ongoing adaptations which attended to the nuances of my context, have been in the interest of deepening my awareness and understanding of my own practice and creating opportunities for authentic reflection and learning. My own critical capacity has been heightened during my research journey. I employed criticality in responding to student engagement by adapting and designing new data collection methods which facilitated their availability. These decisions were made possible by first adopting a pragmatic approach to my research design, informed by an awareness of research paradigms and their varied approaches and belief systems. In the following chapters I share the findings from the three cycles of action research. In Chapter Six I will share the findings from cycles one and two. Subsequently, in Chapter Seven the *Planning Tool* inspired by cycles one and two will be outlined. In Chapter Eight, I will share findings from action research cycle three. Finally, in Chapter Nine I will outline the final structure of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* which responds to findings from the three action research cycles.

6 Findings from Action Research Cycles One and Two

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from cycles one and two of data collection. While changes were made to teaching between the two cycles (Appendix Q), findings from both cycles remained similar. There were significant structural changes to the Social Studies modules which took place between cycles. In cycle one, GE was taught in one semester with lectures twice a week, whereas in cycle two the content was split across two semesters with lectures once a week for a full academic year. Many of the changes made to my teaching in cycle two were as a result of this structural change. I also made changes to individual lessons or activities. Despite the changes I made between cycles, findings from both cycles show that while some students demonstrate an increased commitment to and engagement with criticality, many did not. Many students expressed a perception that they were being critical, but in practice I was still seeing many examples of uncritical work such as lack of reflection or an absence of questioning stereotypical interpretations of justice issues.

Within both cycles, I learnt a considerable amount about my approach to teaching, identifying where I was still not practicing the values that I aimed to model within my teaching. Through reflection, observation and engagement with critical friends, I was able to learn more about my approaches and identify where my teaching practices could be hindering students' development of criticality. I draw on the core disposition of a commitment to criticality, the four key skills, and considerations in relation to outcomes identified through my literature review and presented in Chapter Four, as a structure against which to present my findings. These factors guided my teaching, data collection and analysis as they represent the critical global learning standards that students should be supported to develop through engagement with GE. When analysing the data I identified where there was success and where tensions arose and indicated areas for improvement in my practices.

The findings presented in this chapter show some of the ways my understanding of critical thinking and its relationship to ITE and to GE evolved over the course of cycles one and two. I present both the successes and challenges I faced in my practice as I endeavoured to

support students in developing their commitment to criticality in addition to the core critical global learning skills, a summary of which can be found in Table 6 below..

| Key skills and dispositions developed and module outcomes | Successes | Challenges |
|--|--|--|
| Core disposition: Commitment to criticality | Many students displayed a positive attitude towards critical thinking and appeared to incorporate it into their lives inside and outside the classroom | Providing students with an ambitious yet achievable model of criticality to aim for and commit to |
| Skill 1: develop and use a global learning knowledge base | In class tasks and assignments students demonstrated evidence of developing and using their knowledge base | Responding to student individuality within large groups |
| Skill 2: Learn to question orthodoxies | Teaching methodologies supported students to consider multiple perspectives and begin to challenge their ideas. | Questioning commonly accepted orthodoxies is difficult |
| Skill 3: Engage in self-reflection | Students highlighted that the variety of discussion methodologies supported their engagement in self-reflection | Student self-reflection is difficult to observe and measure |
| Skill 4: Use a values-lens when exploring issues of global justice | Students most often incorporated a values perspective when working to interpret topics they encountered | Finding an appropriate balance between including multiple perspectives and giving time to discriminatory views |
| Outcomes: personal, professional, and societal | There was evidence that students were becoming aware of how the GE topics would impact on their teaching | Students often displayed a tendency to oversimplify issues and misinterpret the justice-oriented approach being promoted within models |

Table 6: Summary of findings from cycles one and two

The challenges I encountered in finding the best way to support students to move beyond their comfort zones was a theme which emerged across findings from both cycles. This challenge was exacerbated by unpredictable and erratic engagement from students which both Anna, my critical friend, and I experienced throughout our teaching in both cycles. In our critical conversations we regularly discussed challenges presented by inconsistent attendance levels, which meant that some students missed multiple weeks out of the semester and were not building up a bank of knowledge or practicing the necessary skills. Furthermore, a common thread through our discussions focused on strategies to counteract disparity in student interest and participation levels. In October 2018 we discussed that we

were both having to pause our teaching at times to ask students to stop chatting or being disruptive. Anna indicated that she felt group dynamics might have been influencing this as students tended to sit in friendship groups of six to ten.

When sharing excerpts from the data, pseudonyms (Anna and Maria) have been used to uphold the anonymity of both critical friends. Figure 9 below outlines how the source for each piece of data has been labelled. This key has been used for focus group interviews, surveys and MSCSs. In the case of reflections and conversations with critical friends the relevant month and year has been included without the below key.

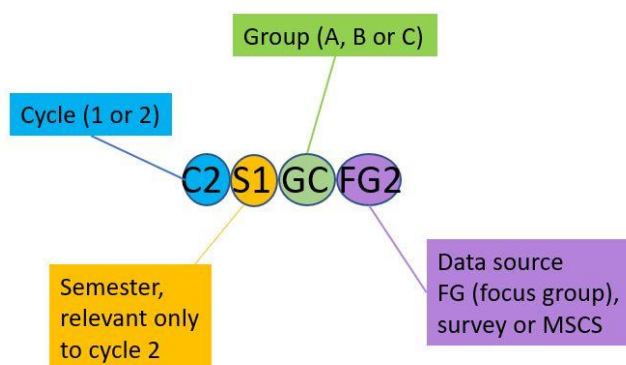


Figure 9: Key for Identifying Data Sources from Cycles One and Two

6.2 Core Disposition: Develop a commitment to criticality

As established in Chapter Four, developing a commitment to criticality is an important precursor to developing the identified critical global learning skills. During cycles one and two, I attempted to foster this disposition in my students through the ways in which I communicated my expectations for them, including modelling criticality, designing tasks and activities that required their critical engagement and praising criticality when I encountered it.

Throughout cycles one and two, many students displayed a positive attitude towards critical thinking and appeared to be incorporating it into their lives both inside and outside the classroom. In surveys, 82.4% of students indicated that following their engagement in

the modules, they were now more likely to question new information. This was also evident when students talked about how they engaged with new knowledge outside of the classroom. Within the final focus group conducted in cycle one, students discussed how they had begun applying what they learned in class to their everyday lives, that they had begun to question new information more, and also reported that they had a better understanding of the world as a result. This is summed up by one student who stated that: *“I have always read the news every day, but I didn’t always understand it. Now I understand it more”* (C1GAFG3). In the middle of the second cycle of data collection, students had a break of six weeks between semesters and shared in the focus group during the second semester that they hadn’t left their learning behind during their break, but continued to think about it while at home. One student shared that *“it gives you even more of a perspective like, when we had learned so much last semester, we were off for six weeks then, so we were living at home and everything and thinking about things that we had been learning ... so when we came back, we had a way better perspective”* (C2S2GCFG2). It appeared that a contributing factor which supported students to develop this commitment was the relationship they built with me during classes. Students indicated that my approach supported their engagement. This is emphasised by one student who stated, *“you made me reflect on a lot of things but never seemed judgemental or like you were pushing an agenda”* (C1GASurvey). Another sentiment that was reiterated throughout the data is reflected in this quote: *“great energy, enthusiasm and passion got passed on”* (C1GASurvey).

6.2.1 Challenge: Providing students with an ambitious yet achievable model of criticality to aim for and commit to

Despite positive signs in relation to students’ commitment to criticality, it became clear during conversations with Anna that we were not presenting students with the same model of criticality to aim for. My approach to encouraging students’ commitment to criticality, specifically modelling and praising criticality, differed from that of Anna. Anna was often more ambitious in her expectations of students, whereas I was often happy to accept and praise any level of criticality from students. From the outset of this study, I was inspired to explore the disparity that I noticed between students’ proclaimed critical thinking skill levels and the skill level I observed from their assignments and engagement in class. From

observing and reflecting on my teaching in conjunction with Anna, it has made me aware that my approach may not have been pushing students to reach their full potential in terms of developing their criticality. I felt that the simpler understanding of criticality I was unintentionally promoting was easier to commit to than a more ambitious interpretation. This may have led to the disparity which inspired this research.

In encouraging students to deepen their criticality, Anna often modelled being critical more often than I did, and presented students with what I viewed as an ambitious but realistic model of criticality to aim for. This can be seen in a comment I made during a conversation with Anna in September 2018:

My biases are coming out... I think anything students do in terms of questioning or criticality is great and I forget to push them further ... you seem to be more critical of their engagement and push them further and have higher expectations of their levels of criticality ... my commitment to criticality is crucial to allow them to be critical.

In the final line of my reflection, I highlight that I believed student criticality was dependent on my own display of critical thinking. Comments like this were common in our conversations and in my reflections. While our conversations sometimes made Anna wonder if her expectations were set too high for students, she regularly gave practical advice on how I could help students to further self-reflect, giving examples of the questions she used in her own practice. Anna's questions often involved asking students to consider the origins of their ideas and encouraged them to consider who was benefitting from those belief systems. For example, within the game *If the World Were a Village of 100 People*, when students tended to significantly overestimate population numbers in South America, Anna's questions supported students to connect this common generalisation with Trump's rhetoric around building a wall between the USA and Mexico to counteract illegal immigration which he regularly falsified claims in relation to. Following these conversations, in my weekly lectures I worked to adjust my expectations for students by engaging in additional modelling of criticality, and including more questioning during classes. However, as I tried to adapt my practices, finding the right balance continued to be a challenge.

Being able to view my practices through the lens of another person's practices in teaching the same content helped me to identify the places where I was experiencing myself as a "living contradiction" (Whitehead, 2019). While I professed a commitment to criticality, and believed myself to be modelling and encouraging it in the classroom, through observations and reflections I was able to identify aspects of my practice where I was falling short. Becoming aware of the shortfalls in my own practices was critical in helping me to re-evaluate my expectations for students and to raise my standards for them. This re-evaluation is evidence of my ongoing journey towards developing my personal critical thinking skills throughout this research as I encountered and considered new perspectives.

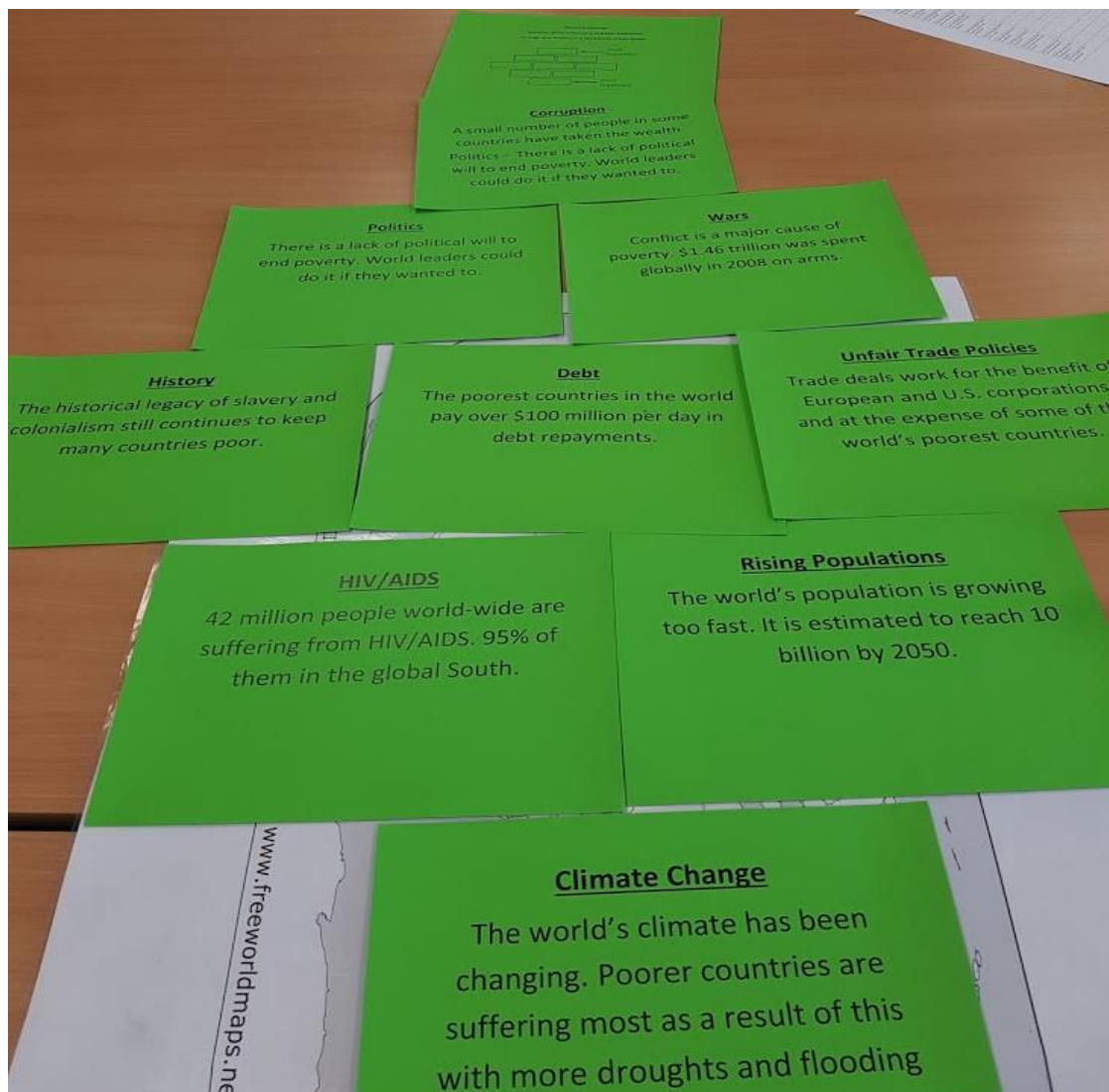
While there could be many underlying reasons for the disparity between Anna's and my own expectations for student criticality, one possible reason is the biases I had developed through my own pre-conceived expectations. My experiences as a student teacher and then as a teacher educator led me to have low expectations for students' critical thinking skills, allowing me to see small changes as significant. It is well documented that ITE can include very homogenous student groups (Hyland, 2012; Keane and Heinz, 2015), which can hamper students' critical thinking development as a result of a lack of exposure to diversity (Loes et al., 2012; Pascarella et al., 2014). Anna did not attend ITE and cycle two was her first full year working as a teacher educator, meaning that she did not carry the same biases informed by prior experience that I did. This point of comparison between our practices allowed me to re-evaluate my expectations and how I communicate them to students ahead of the third action research cycle.

6.3 Skill One: Develop and use a knowledge base

In order to enhance critical thinking skills, it is necessary to ensure teaching retains a focus not only on skill development but on knowledge enhancement. I was conscious of the importance of ensuring that students enhanced their knowledge base in relation to global justice issues, but also that much of the information concerned would be new for students. There was a very broad range of content that needed to be covered. When designing sessions where I knew students would be confronted with information that was new or that might contradict their prior knowledge in the area, I was consistently conscious of trying to use a variety of teaching approaches. I sought to present students with multiple viewpoints

on different issues and provide opportunities for debates and discussions of concepts and perspectives. I aimed to encourage students to be consistently considering and evaluating their own conceptualisations in light of what they were exposed to during classes.

One of activities used within both cycles which required students to employ and develop their knowledge base were ranking activities (Figure 10). During the example in the photograph below, students were asked to work in groups to consider the leading cause of poverty and rank the answers within a diamond shape. As evident in the two examples in Figure 10, while students often placed corruption at the top of the list the first time they completed this activity, when the activity was repeated following lessons on topics such as trade, debt, or climate change, their answers often changed as they drew on their new knowledge to inform their thinking.



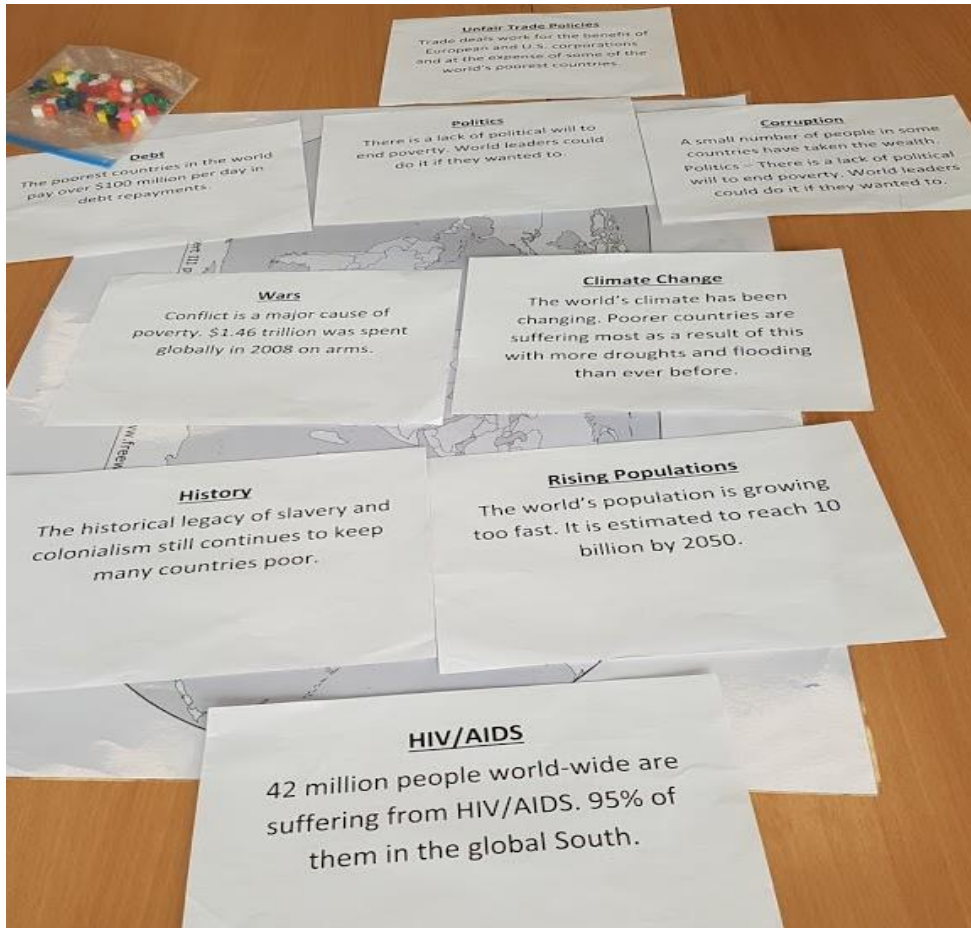



Figure 10: Ranking Activity during Cycle 1

In class tasks, such as ranking activities and assignments showed evidence of students developing and using their knowledge base. There was also evidence within interviews and surveys. Surveys found that 98% of students felt they had a greater awareness and understanding of global issues as a result of the modules. Additionally, students highlighted specific examples of when their ideas were challenged, such as this student who shared that *“the web of life forced me to pause and reflect on sustainability, getting me to ask pertinent questions about the elements and their impact on society”* (C1GASurvey). Additionally, students emphasised where there was new learning for them for example this student who stated *“I have gained a good understanding of interdependence. I can see how we rely on others and how our actions impact others”* (C2S1GBSurvey). Students often indicated that they felt what they were learning was very important, which was highlighted by one student who reported that *“the info we have engaged with is about our world and everyone should be aware of what is happening in it”* (C1GASurvey). Furthermore, survey responses indicated that 84% of students either

strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that that they were more careful about the language that they were using as a result of engaging in the module. Language and terminology were used as a focus during both cycles to highlight the diverging interpretations and perspectives on global justice topics. Students were encouraged to deepen their awareness of the language they used and the underlying messages they might be representing with their choice of terminology.

In their assessment for cycle two students were asked to choose five terms, define them in their own words and identify how their understanding had evolved during the course of the module. Figure 11 below presents three examples which show where some students who were grappling with complex topics, shared how their understanding of them evolved over the course of the module. This showed their willingness to adapt and alter their original perspectives and highlighted their understanding that knowledge is complex.

Charity



My definition

- Charity is making sacrifices and doing things for the good of others, for example donating time or money. However some forms of charity do more harm than good, such as volun-tourism. For example, people volunteering in orphanages abroad could be making at-risk children feel confused or abandoned when they leave after a short time.

Previously...

- I had assumed that all voluntary work was beneficial and intrinsically good. I had not considered the profit that many large companies such as volunteer abroad make from innocent do gooders. I had also not considered the harm that can be done from surface level charity work without getting into the route of the inequality.

A very useful video for exploring this fully- <https://youtu.be/qNch2WwBnh8>


If being completely honest, hearing the word 'inequality' has always overwhelmed me a little. It is a term full of complexities and one that I considered too compound for my mind to ever truly grasp a full and accurate understanding of.

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The question put forward in the video entitled "Who's developing who?" (TheRulesOrg 2015) presented powerful meaning for me. It gave me a hold on what the word 'inequality' truly represents. Although Global Education has taught me that impartiality and fairness are absent in many areas of life in today's world, the question of who is developing who evoked criticality and understanding surrounding the true severity of inequality at it's core.

POVERTY

Initially when asked for a definition of the word poverty, I thought of a lack of money and resources. I pictured people who were financially poor. I associated it with the homeless and people living in the 3rd World.



9

Having studied poverty in this module and given the term more thought, I have learnt that poverty refers to **much more than** a person's **financial state**. Poverty has many appearances. Poverty can refer to people that are **hungry** and malnourished. It can also signify that a person has **limited access to services**, such as education and healthcare. Poverty can expand to people being **discriminated** against and excluded from their society.

The importance and need to end poverty in our world is clear to me after participating in this module.

POVERTY

10

Figure 11: Examples of Evolution of Students' Conceptualisations during Cycle Two

6.3.1 Skill One Challenge: Responding to student individuality within large groups

While many students both professed and demonstrated an engagement with new knowledge and an increased awareness of the complexity of global justice issues, there was variety in the quality of outcomes demonstrated by students. The challenge for me was in

responding to student individuality within large groups as there were teaching approaches which consistently appeared to be effective for some and not for others.

As evidenced earlier in this chapter, some students were able to demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the complexity inherent in global justice issues. However, other students offered simplistic conceptualisations of issues when asked to define them. Some examples from cycle one surveys are outlined below:

Sustainability: “using resources equally” ; “how a resource is used conservatively”; “the ability to maintain status quo”; “amount of something and longevity”

Global Citizenship: “be a member of a country”; “links with human rights”; “acknowledgement of others in the world”; “being recognised as a member of society”

Development: “world”; “when everything changes over time”; “building up something over a period”

Power Relationships: “connects to the wider world”; “between countries in the global north”

Justice: “human rights”; “equality for all”; “providing solutions to problems”; “correct consequences for actions”; “long term charitable actions”

There was evidence of an awareness among students that some of them needed additional support to deepen their understanding. During a focus group, one student stated that “I need a lot of things defined for me” (C1GAFG3). Additionally, in the end of semester survey, a student highlighted where they felt there were gaps in the provision during the module by sharing that they thought there was a “lack of education in each concept. More information needs to be given and problems highlighted” (C1GASurvey).

From my reflections, it is clear that I was conscious of this tension and aware that some students needed additional prompting and modelling to support their learning. However, I also noted that this modelling was something I struggled to include in sessions. In a reflection in January 2018 I felt that “I stumbled over my words sometimes, I don’t always explain things properly”. In March 2018 I highlighted the impact that I felt the lack of clarity in my teaching was having by stating “I don’t think they got as much of the complexity as I wanted them to, so I think I do need to be more explicit about complexity of stuff and the connections ... I need to ask better questions”.

Not only did some students need extra support to develop their awareness and understanding of concepts, the challenging nature of the topics being explored presented an additional challenge. Students in both cycles reported that taking on board the information being explored was also difficult. This struggle is summed up by one student who shared that “*people normally try to shy away from the types of topics that were explored*” (C1GASurvey). As highlighted, there was a diversity in students’ engagement with, and adoption of, ideas and concepts being explored. During a focus group, one student stated that “*people take it on but to different levels. People take different aspects of it and don't see everything as being completely relevant to their lives*” (C2S2GBFG2). My observations of students and conversations with Anna indicated that roughly one third of students were struggling to connect their learning to their own lives.

Through observations and reflections following cycles one and two, I started to identify the types of engagement I noticed from students across different groups and different cycles. One of the patterns I noticed was that some students struggled to empathise with, or understand, situations very different from their own. I felt that this struggle led them to disconnect from learning about structures and systems of power in the world. My thinking is evident in this excerpt from a reflection in November 2018:

There seems to be a group of students who struggle to empathise with others or to see scenarios from different perspectives and seem to come at scenarios only from their own perspective or background even when presented with case studies of others - they don't seem to be able to put themselves in a scenario where you might need to break the law or do something unethical to save your life. For example, when presented with case studies in relation to forced migration, there were many students who found it impossible to conceive of a situation where they would find it to be in any way justifiable to illegally leave or enter another country.

I noticed that some students were aware of disconnecting themselves from justice issues and were working to notice where their reactions differed from their peers or from what I was presenting. However, I was also aware of students distancing themselves without being conscious of doing it. It became clear following cycles one and two that there was a need to ensure more time was spent during classes supporting students to make connections with systems of power rather than viewing them as outside of, or separate from, their lives.

In working to become more aware of my own practice, I noted in reflections and conversations with Anna and Maria that I felt I was focusing heavily on content over skill development in my teaching. The issue with this approach was in not allowing sufficient time for students to digest and engage with the content I was presenting. Students also highlighted this as a tension they noticed in their programme, that often lecturers can tend to focus on content delivery at the expense of time for exploration and evaluation of the information:

It's very like rote learning like it goes back to secondary school you have to know all these dates and figures and there's not even a communication going on between the lecturer and us. You say, 'Oh well I don't understand that' and it's just 'Oh well it's in the notes like'.
(C1GAFG1)

Furthermore, when discussing the challenges that we experienced during cycles one and two, Anna immediately noted this as an overarching tension which impacted on our work. She specifically highlighted “*the tension between aims, and time to realise them*”. She concluded that it is “*very difficult to create conditions for exploration in these 45-minute themed chunks*” (Anna, February 2021). The majority of classes on the B.Ed. programme are allotted forty-five minutes, which in GE we use to assign one theme per slot. It was very challenging to respond to a diversity of student needs and perspectives on each topic within such short slots. In Chapter Seven I present the *Planning Tool* created for, and implemented in, cycle three which aimed to respond to this challenge within my context.

6.4 Skill Two: Learn to question orthodoxies;

Learning to question orthodoxies and to consider and create new stories that challenge the status quo and pervasive stereotypical images of the world is often a significant mindset change for students and a skill to be practiced and developed. Considerate of how challenging this skill could be for students to develop, I worked on it regularly by providing varied and regular opportunities for debate and discussion to support them in the process of questioning. Furthermore, teaching throughout cycles one and two focused on building students' awareness of global justice issues, often from perspectives previously unfamiliar to them which challenged commonly held perceptions of how the world works.

Simulation games, such as *The Biscuit Game* and the *Trading Game* helped students to challenge their preconceptions about the world. Both simulation games are loud and chaotic and allow students to develop their own approaches to food distribution and trade. Indeed, students often engaged in migration, tied aid, or unfair trade agreements themselves. While engaging with simulation games, students naturally started to ask questions about how resources are distributed and utilised around the world when the game required them to face inequality. By simplifying complex topics that are often taken for granted, simulation games allowed students to consider different perspectives on challenging topics.

When describing some of the teaching methodologies used in classes, students said that they supported them in “*getting me to ask pertinent questions*” and also “*help[ed] question statements/situations more deeply*” (C2S2GBSurvey). Another student shared that “*it made me think about the wider world while negating my skewed view of the world from the media's portrayal*” (C1GASurvey). When asked why critical thinking was important, one group of students during cycle one discussed the impact that the media has in creating and spreading orthodoxies:

Student 1: Because you have to be sceptical at all moments because

Student 2: The media

Student 1: The media are always filling your mind with what they want you to think

Student 3: What's on those attractive headlines

(C1GAFG1)

During cycle two, another group of students connected critical thinking to questioning their own actions in their everyday lives, highlighting that often people do things without considering the underlying, taken-for-granted assumptions behind them:

I think it's also for me looking about the motivation behind like things that we do. Like things that we all take for granted, I swear like things that you have to go and think like 'But why'? Like if you are like buying nice new clothes or anything you have to think like 'Why am I doing this? What's motivating me' To get to look that way, or like is it social pressure or is it like that ... Just like everyday decisions, just trying to look deeper and be like 'But what is my actual like motivation behind like'? ... I don't know, for me that's critical thinking on one aspect.

(C2S1GBFG1)

Data from the broader group within surveys and MSCSs also reflected what students reported during focus group interviews. The majority of students, 82%, who completed surveys indicated that they felt they were more likely to question things they heard as a result of the modules. Furthermore, 64% of students selected increased questioning as one of the most significant changes they identified with when completed the MSCSs.

6.4.1 Skill Two Challenge: Questioning commonly accepted orthodoxies is difficult

It became clear that while many students were enthusiastic about developing their questioning skills, the task of challenging perspectives or long-held beliefs was difficult for them. Students found it challenging to question perspectives that they considered definitive, which is evident in my reflection from April 2018 which I wrote following a conversation with students who were struggling with questioning commonly accepted narratives about the world:

When presented with opposing viewpoints or when exposed to a wide variety of views, students indicated that they often felt shocked that people felt differently to them as they were not used to hearing opposing voices. They argued that this then made it difficult for them to counteract views they did not agree with as they were not used to interacting with them.

My reflection highlights the challenge for students who were not accustomed to interacting with perspectives that challenged their worldview. Orthodoxies by definition are deeply ingrained in society, and so to question them was difficult for many students who may perceive them as foundational to their identity. I supported students to question orthodoxies by incorporating images from around the world which allowed me to integrate diverse perspectives on issues. In exit slips from a lesson focused on images, students shared that while they enjoyed seeing the photos, they found it difficult to have their ideas challenged in this way, some indicated that it led to them feeling ‘hopeless’. Following a session where she observed me teaching, Maria noticed that there was a need for students to have time to ask questions given the complex nature of the content: *“It would be good to give them time to ask you questions because there were things coming up that were difficult”*. Similarly, during a critical conversation following our lectures in October 2018, Anna acknowledged that confronting misconceptions can be challenging for students as

“with the learning there can often be a lot of shame and students can then fight back against and get defensive about that shame”.

Similar to the challenges I faced when promoting the other skills within the model, I became aware of the tension between encouraging students to question orthodoxies, which often pushed them out of their comfort zone, and ensuring that this practice did not cause them to disengage from the learning in the module. Some students struggled more than others with questioning or challenging orthodoxies. I observed this during classes and noted it in my reflections and conversations with critical friends throughout both cycles. Additionally, this also emerged in data from both surveys and focus groups where students noticed that they and their classmates were sometimes reticent to question or critique their prior convictions. The excerpt below from one focus group highlights this tension for students:

Student 3: Sometimes it's nearly an attitude that needs to be changed.

Student 2: I think that as well that, I don't know, some of the issues are kind of scary like ... I know I'd be a bit scared when you hear them and then I think that kind of makes people shy away as well.

Student 3: They don't face up to it, definitely, yeah.

Student 2: Yeah because I'd sometimes be a bit uncomfortable when you hear things like that, you know like the 80:20 ratio and you'd be like 'Oh my god' like, do you know? I don't know if that would make people less kind of ...

Student 3: And for some people it flicks the switch like 'Oh I've to do something' and then someone somewhere is like I'm withdrawing.

Student 4: I think it really depends on your personality and how you've been brought up because if your parents don't care then you probably won't care

Student 2: I think your group of friends as well, like you know if you're kind of in a group that doesn't you're not going to stand out and say to peers you shouldn't be using plastic guys.

Student 3: And definitely at home as well if your parents are farmers who, you know, do a lot of things against the grain or whatever you're not going to go against your whole family either.

(C2S2GCFG1)

Mirroring the perspectives of students in the above excerpt, Anna encouraged me to reconsider how I approached the promotion of this skill in the classroom. She highlighted that “*challenging those orthodoxies does require skills, but is first and foremost a decision, built on understanding, and unlearning, and requiring commitment, and, crucially, a strategy*”. During our critical conversations, Anna and I discussed the need to ensure students were aware that misconceptions about the world are widespread rather than individual. Ensuring there were opportunities which supported students to depersonalise their misconceptions and adopt a broader view of justice issues was the strategy we adopted when designing the *Planning Tool* and specific lessons during cycle three.

6.5 Skill Three: Engage in self-reflection

Engaging in self-reflection supports students to consider and deepen their understandings of themselves, their place in the world and their relationship to others in the context of what they are learning about GE topics. I endeavoured to be considerate of the potential uneasiness that self-reflection could cause for students in my approach to teaching. I provided opportunities for students to engage in self-reflection by prompting them to apply their learning to their own lives and asked them to consider their responses and reactions to what they were learning. By encouraging self-reflection and praising efforts when I observed them, I aimed to facilitate self-reflection in a supportive and non-threatening manner.

Methodologies such as ranking activities and simulation games were used to support students’ self-reflection. Activities were followed by debriefing discussions where students were asked to apply their learning to their own lives. Students highlighted that the variety of discussion methodologies supported their engagement in self-reflection. Discussion methodologies included Round Robin (which gives multiple students the opportunity to answer the same question), Walking Debates (which allows students to compare their answers to others), Dice Discussion (which involves rolling a dice to choose a question and broadens discussions), Concentric Circles (which allows students to discuss the same topic with multiple students consecutively), *Socratic Questioning* and deBono’s *Thinking Hats* (which both include structured question prompts or themes). One student stated that “*discussion and information that was relevant in our own lives*” (C2S1GCSurvey), which

was reiterated by many students who indicated that they appreciated opportunities to connect their learning to their own lives.

When completing the template for the MSCSs, students were asked to identify factors which led to changes in their criticality. During both cycles, many students cited self-reflection as the catalyst for change. For some students their self-reflections were influenced by *“seeing how my opinions compared to others in certain topics”* (C2S1GCMSCS). Other students were more influenced by the topics being explored: *“concepts discussed encouraged me to challenge my thoughts and opinions”* (C1GAMSCS) and *“listening in class and realising how little I actually knew about the world around me”* (C2S1GBMSCS). Additionally, within MSCSs, students’ self-reflection was evident in their consideration of the impact their increased criticality was having for them. One student shared that they are *“more open to listen to others’ opinions and think about what values I have”* (C1GAMSCS). While other students had begun to consider changes to their own practices, such as this student who stated that *“I realised that if we do not make a big change to our way of life soon, life for generations to come will be v. difficult”* (C2S1GCMSCS). An increased reflection on personal actions was also evident within surveys, as evidenced in the following response: *“I was able to think twice about the products I consumed (e.g. plastic) and how we use language”* (C2S2GCSurvey). It was clear from survey responses that many students felt the module enabled them to engage in self-reflection and demonstrated some of the ways in which they had been considering their own values and perceptions.

6.5.1 Skill Three Challenge: Student self-reflection is difficult to observe and measure

Evidence of students engaging in self-reflection often presented itself during end of semester surveys. However, mid-semester I was frequently unsure if students were engaging in self-reflection and was concerned about their engagement levels. Within reflections and discussions with critical friends during the course of each module, I frequently expressed concern and frustration, in strong language, about some students seeming disengagement from the modules for example:

Students appear lethargic and uninterested ... They do not appear personally or professionally interested ... These students need to be actively engaging with the

materials by reading, discussing and answering questions in order to wake them from their disengagement.

(Reflection November 2018)

Without being engaged and invested in the content of the module, I was concerned that students would not engage in self-reflection or consider the implications from their learning for their own lives. Through many discussions with critical friends and colleagues I explored methodologies that might facilitate increased engagement from students. Maria suggested that *“sometimes students need to be scaffolded to do the self-reflection piece ... so asking them to justify answers and question their answers a bit more can help them to do this”*.

I was also concerned that the nature of the content being explored was exacerbating the challenge of self-reflection for students, which is evident from the following excerpt from my reflection in May 2019:

The context in which critical thinking was being promoted, I believe, also added to the difficulty for some students. This was not critical thinking in the abstract but specifically in relation to global issues with an aim to developing a personal commitment to justice and human rights. For many students, this context was far removed from their own experiences and so they were struggling both with the aims of the module and with their own preconceived notions of critical thinking.

The barriers to self-reflection were also evident in student responses during surveys and focus groups. Some students cited the nature of the content as a hurdle, the following comment was replicated by students throughout the data: *“it’s difficult to hear the harsh realities in relation to injustice”* (C2S2GCSurvey). There was also a resistance from some students to engage in self-reflection, one student shared that they felt *“some students did not want to change or alter their views”* (C1GASurvey). While another student stated that *“I feel like the modules that are more thinking ones, people don’t really care if they miss them”* (C2S1GBFG1). This disengagement from self-reflection is what I was noticing throughout both cycles.

Data from students combined with my reflections and conversations with critical friends highlighted the complexity of tracking and evaluating student engagement with self-reflection throughout both cycles. While students responded reflectively when asked to do so at the conclusion of modules, evidence of their reflections rarely emerged during the

course of modules. When asked to answer questions or offer ideas during classes, I noted that answers were often simplistic or factual and rarely demonstrated reflective thinking. For example, when asked to offer examples of themselves as critical thinkers, many students gave examples of deciding on a college course, choosing modules in college, or thinking about school placement. While all of these examples do require some level of critical thinking, they were simplistic answers that did not showcase them as experienced critical thinkers. Anna and I regularly discussed our frustration at the limited engagement we often experienced from students and regularly brainstormed how to counteract it. I was mindful to include more explicit opportunities and instructions for reflection and approaches to encourage greater engagement when planning for action research cycle three.

6.6 Skill Four: Use a values-lens when exploring issues of global justice

When exploring GE topics, students learn about the underlying values which inform and shape global justice topics. Being able to recognise values supports students to ask critical questions about possible motives or biases behind information they encounter. When teaching about GE topics I incorporated a values-lens, teaching about topics from human rights or justice perspectives. The quotes and diverse voices I drew on in my teaching highlighted the values I wanted to promote. I often shared my own values with students and highlighted where values were present in the materials I shared, modelling the process for them. For example, during the session focused on gender, I declared my stance as a feminist and what my personal understanding of that is. Then, throughout that lesson, I used phrases such as “as a feminist I believe ...” or “from a feminist perspective this is challenging because ...”. This approach allowed me to highlight for students where my values impacted on my interpretation of the topic. However, I stressed to students that while I believed in the values of feminism, they were not required to. I acknowledge that the process of coming to recognise implicit values and learn to question personal values is complex. Consequently, I tried to ensure that students were provided with ample opportunities for reflection, debate and discussion to support them in this process.

During analysis, ‘values’ was most often coded when students were defining or discussing global justice topics. Students most often incorporated a values perspective when working

to interpret topics such as ‘global citizenship’, ‘human rights’, ‘justice’, ‘equality’ and ‘development’. The examples below highlight the values approach taken by students:

Defining Global Citizenship:

all persons having rights and responsibilities that come with being a member of the world

Defining Justice:

fairness, equality. No differentiation due to age, gender, ethnicity, nationality
(C1GASurvey)

One of the areas my teaching focused on was supporting students to move away from a charity-based mindset towards an understanding of topics informed by a justice mindset. This approach was discussed in Chapter Two. I was encouraged to see students drawing on justice-frameworks such as human rights and considering their responsibilities in their understanding of topics. In my reflection in May 2018, I noted that “*this values-based interpretation of concepts happens far more frequently than instances where students return definitions which were charity-focused or egocentric*”.

6.6.1 Skill Four Challenge: Finding an appropriate balance between including multiple perspectives and giving time to discriminatory views

Although I saw positive results during cycle one in terms of students applying a values-lens to their learning, there was limited data demonstrating where students were examining and sharing their personal values and how these interacted with what they were learning. Consequently, I made a conscious effort during cycle two to increase the opportunities for students to consider their personal values in the context of their learning by focusing on probing questions and explicitly asking them to consider the values inherent in what they were learning. However, I discovered that when there were increased opportunities for students to consider and share their value-based perspectives on topics, it emerged that some students held different values to those promoted in the modules. While students in previous years may have held values that were in conflict with those of the module, they hadn’t arisen to the same extent as they did during cycle two. I noted this during a reflection in December of 2018:

There are students who fundamentally don't agree with the things I am talking about in the module ... it is the first time that I have asked students basically to put their values on the page ... in the past it was easy for students to gloss over and not share their values.

I do not have data from students which reflects the discriminatory views I encountered as those students did not contribute those perspectives to the data I collected. However, I experienced students expressing explicitly transphobic, homophobic, and sexist views. Additionally, some students did not agree with the equity and human rights-based approach that Anna and I were following, believing instead in meritocratic approaches to resource distribution. Despite the small cohort of students who expressed dissenting or challenging perspectives, while in the process of undertaking the modules, this tension felt inescapable and impacted significantly on my experience of teaching the module. From reflections and conversations with Anna, who was also experiencing this tension in her groups, it is clear that I was finding it challenging to identify strategies to respond in a way that upheld my values in honouring student voice but still stay true to values of human rights and equity. The tension I was experiencing in trying to find this balance is captured in my reflection from November 2018 which I recorded following a conversation with Anna:

We [Anna and I] were reading the feedback together and then one student left behind their concept map so we had a look at that as well, there was really difficult stuff ... so I'm struck between not wanting to give air and space to those racist, sexist, homophobic viewpoints, but then also wanting to show them so that we can challenge them and just name them from the outset and talk about why our viewpoints are important and what happens if these are our viewpoints and what impact does that have on the classroom and on our teaching.

I continued to problematise this challenge with Anna throughout cycle two, feeling unable to address it in my practice immediately without further consideration. In reflecting on this tension, I also began to re-consider my beliefs about education. While I was happy to declare that I believed in student voice, and aimed to draw on teaching methodologies which gave students opportunities to express their views, I began to realise I did not want all perspectives to be afforded equal weight in my classroom. From my reflection in December 2018, it is clear that I was finding this tension very frustrating to navigate:

In particular there is a lot of transphobic and sexist views coming out but there's also it's also clear that equality, human rights and justice are not values that these

students hold, even after twelve weeks of the module. ... well there are standard universal values and while I do want students thinking about their own values and attitudes, I actually don't want this transphobic stuff coming back. I actually don't want to see that they fundamentally disagree with me on some of this stuff.

As an educator, I felt a responsibility for what was emerging in the classroom. I was conscious that I had created the environment which allowed and encouraged these perspectives to emerge without being adequately prepared to respond when they did. I was unsure about whether or not it was a good decision to provide opportunities for viewpoints which I considered to be in conflict with the values of the module to be afforded time in the classroom. It seemed to me that some students appeared to have their viewpoints strengthened through the process of being confronted with alternative viewpoints by using it as an opportunity to defend their position. Engaging with action research provided me with the opportunity to become aware of this tension and consider how best to respond in future. On foot of reflections, research into relevant literature, and discussions with colleagues, I was encouraged to continue to provide opportunities for dissenting voices to be aired in cycle three, but to be better prepared to respond in future. This challenge is also addressed within the discussions offered in Chapter Nine.

6.7 Consideration for Teaching: Outcomes

Engaging with the modules led students to consider the implications arising from their newly acquired knowledge and criticality. Some students focused on personal outcomes related to changes they were making to their own actions due to their increased awareness of justice issues and criticality skills. This is emphasised by the quote below from one student who professed to have experienced a significant change in her own actions as a result of the module:

They think I'm a crazy activist at home now but like it's like I'm telling them, ' Don't be buying plastic' now and like last night I was looking up bamboo toothbrushes and stuff like that it's just, I'm like trying to change.
(C1GAFG3)

However, most students focused on the professional outcomes from the modules for them as future classroom teachers in their contributions during focus groups and surveys. There was evidence that students were becoming aware of how the GE topics would impact on

their teaching. One student commented that *“it made me realise that certain issues may arise in the classroom such as gender and inequality, and I had to think about my feelings about these topics and how I could handle them if they arose”* (C2S2GBSurvey). Students also focused on the need to develop their knowledge base to support them as classroom teachers, as one student stated: *“I am doing my best to learn more so that I can pass on good information/ habits/ decision making to children I teach”* (C1GAMSCS). The need to be knowledgeable and mindful of the messages they passed on through their teaching featured within a focus group discussion during cycle one which is summed up by the following excerpt:

I think as well that you find that, you're always kind of have the news in the background when you're going about your daily life but it's only now I guess I'm starting to think well I need to be knowledgeable about this for when I go out and teach. I need to you know be able to say 'I don't know about that'. So, I notice that I've started to read a little bit more articles and journals and stuff like that, just to keep myself informed.
(C1GAFG1)

Furthermore, many students recognised that their lifestyle choices and actions would impact on their teaching. The following conversation highlights the implications students were beginning to consider following their engagement in the modules during cycle two:

Student 2: I suppose the responsibility of thinking like when I become a teacher, when I go out in schools I'll definitely portray this kind of attitude

Student 3: To have a global perspective

Student 2: Or I'll definitely emphasis on this ... you know you feel responsible that you have to educate that type ...

Brighid: Okay.

Student 4: And I suppose to do that you have to live like that as well, you know.

(C2S2GCFCG2)

Not only were many students starting to consider the personal and professional implications from their increased criticality, they were also showing enthusiasm to learn more about possible responses to injustice. Variations of the following statement arose

repeatedly from students during classes as well as in surveys and focus group interviews: “*I’d like to find out more about what I can do to help the issues we learn about in class*” (C1GASurvey). Statements such as this demonstrated students’ commitment to continuing their journey towards increased criticality beyond the modules.

6.7.1 Challenge: Students often displayed a tendency to oversimplify issues and misinterpret the justice-oriented approach being promoted within modules

As mentioned previously, when teaching about responses to injustice I focused on moving away from a charity mentality towards a justice-oriented approach. This included encouraging students to begin to acknowledge and take responsibility for the roles they play in systems which perpetuate inequity and injustice. Students reacted in different ways to this approach, one student summed it up by stating that “*for some people it flicks the switch like ‘Oh I’ve to do something’ and then someone somewhere is like ‘I’m withdrawing’*” (C2S2GCFG2). The following excerpt from a focus group discussion at the end of cycle one features students discussing why some of their peers found it challenging to adopt a justice-oriented approach:

I don't think everybody would [want to move towards a justice approach] just, just for the sake of - it's hard to get a majority to agree and even to have like, a deeper focus in thinking about it. Because, yeah I think some people just see the goodness of charity and they don't really ... they just kind of focus on the quick reward ... But, I think with justice because it's much more deeper and it takes a longer amount of time to do and a lot more work, they might not value it as much or see the importance with it as well maybe?
(C1GAFG2)

It is evident from the above that students were aware that some of their peers were resistant to the justice approach I was promoting. However, what I found more concerning were the students who believed themselves to be adopting a justice approach but who demonstrated a disengagement with complexity of topics by oversimplifying issues. This concerned me as I was conscious that where I was observing positive outcomes through students displaying critical global learning skills, these could be informed by a misinterpretation of the concept of justice or an oversimplification of the issues being explored.

This perception was most commonly represented as a tendency for students to present the division between rich and poor, or issues of injustice as a result of luck rather than unearned privilege and the result of structures and systems perpetuating inequality. While I observed, and attempted to tease out and problematise this attitude during classes, students' reflections often stopped at feeling lucky and did not progress to a deeper understanding within the life of the module. For example, one student shared that: *"One thing I do, I get up every morning and I have a shower in my house and I think 'I'm so lucky to have running water' and I actually do think about it every time I have a shower ... wow, I'm so lucky, most of the world don't have it"* (C2S2FGB). Another student highlighted how a classroom activity sparked the following thought for them: *"the migration activity around granting asylum really opened my eyes to the different situation people endure in their home countries and how lucky we are to live in Ireland"* (C2S1GCSurvey). Despite endeavouring to approach topics in a different way and to challenge this perspective, students continued to make statements such as *"I'm lucky enough to be part of a 1st world country like many others. Others around the world are less fortunate"* (C1GASurvey).

Presenting inequality as an accident of luck is reflective of the approach often seen in media (McCurdy, 2016) and so it is not surprising to see it also reflected by students. However, it is harmful as the perpetuation of an oversimplified understanding of development can hamper the potential for change and meaningful action as it removes the need to consider personal responsibility. Furthermore, for students professing a commitment to include critical global learning within their own teaching, where this is informed by a misinterpretation of justice, there is the potential for this approach to be further perpetuated in society through their teaching. In preparing for cycle three, I made a greater effort to ensure the complexity of issues were to the fore when teaching about topics, ensuring that students were aware of historical and structural causes for inequality. Additionally, I planned for the provision of consistent opportunities for students to consider their own roles and responsibilities in the context of their learning.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the findings from cycles one and two of data collected in the context of the core disposition, skills, and outcomes identified through literature review as

outlined in Chapter Four. Findings outlined in this chapter contributed significantly to answering my core research question and responding to the aims of this research project. In particular, cycles one and two helped me to identify some of the barriers which were impacting on the implementation of critical global learning within my context. While observing my own practices during data collection, I was able to identify where there were discrepancies between what I was aiming for and what was being achieved for students. The challenges I identified in relation to the different elements of the model reflect the learning process I undertook during the first two action research cycles of this study. The core challenge I experienced across the two cycles related to identifying more appropriate and effective ways of supporting students to move beyond their comfort zones and challenge their own thinking and preconceptions.

Significantly, the learning from cycles one and two informed the development of the *Planning Tool*. Chapter Seven outlines the structure, practical application and process of developing the *Planning Tool* which was implemented in cycle three. This Planning Tool is a response to my core research question as it represents one of the significant outcomes of this study which offers an approach to the application of critical global learning within ITE.

7 Creating a Planning Tool

7.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter Six, following analysis of action research cycles one and two, I identified a number of aspects of the modules which could be improved to better support students to develop the critical thinking skills and disposition outlined in Chapter Four. In preparing for cycle three, I sought to create a structured approach to delivering the module that would enable me to address the challenges presented in the previous cycles while retaining a consistent focus on students' learning. The result was the *Planning Tool* outlined in this chapter which was designed to support me to better implement the evolving *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*. In combination, the model and the tool create a conceptual framework which informs our understanding of, and provides an approach to teaching, critical global learning in ITE. My aim when developing the *Planning Tool* was to provide a systematic approach to my teaching which would offer space and opportunity to students to learn and to develop critical thinking skills, while honouring students' voices, experiences and opinions without compromising the core values of social justice and human rights.

7.2 Rationale for the creation of the Planning Tool

In developing the *Planning Tool*, I endeavoured to create conditions for learning which would lead to a culture of open and respectful dialogue in the classroom. I was conscious that many of the challenges encountered in the first two cycles of action research related to finding the best ways of supporting students to go beyond their comfort zones and challenge themselves to develop their thinking, understanding and criticality. When envisioning this *Planning Tool*, I embraced the idea of adopting a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Boler, 1999) in which students and I were consistently challenged to be flexible in our perspectives and open to the possibility of change. A pedagogy of discomfort invites us to become comfortable with our discomfort and not allow it to overwhelm us or lead to disengagement, but to learn to see things differently and become more flexible in our outlook (Boler, 1999). Additionally, I was conscious of the tension which emerged in cycles one and two, namely, the inclusion or exclusion of dissenting perspectives. In order to address this tension I incorporated the approach recommended by

Pollard (2018), which involves engaging in respectful and robust dialogue in the classroom in which uncomfortable views are aired in order to be challenged through critical analysis rather than simply quashed by disapproval. In his approach, Pollard (2018) encourages us to embrace discomfort in the classroom. This approach to learning was the overarching principle which informed the development of the *Planning Tool*.

Furthermore, one of the key takeaways for me in reflecting on the first two cycles was that there was a need to consider modules in their entirety rather than approaching lectures separately. It was clear from analysing cycles one and two that many students thrived when given opportunities to actively engage with GE topics and reflect on their personal beliefs. However, when sessions were approached individually, my planning focused predominantly on content delivery, leaving skill and disposition development to fit around the content as a secondary planning focus. As a result, students did not have regular or sufficient time to practice critical thinking and to apply their learning to their own lives. I concluded from my analysis that for students who were struggling to develop the skills and dispositions I was seeking to engender, a more consistent and structured approach in my teaching was required. This sentiment is mirrored by Kyriacou (2014) who posits that as educators gain experience, they tend to take a longer view of how lessons fit together and build on each other over time, whereas beginning teachers tend to focus on short-term learning outcomes for individual lessons. As my awareness and understanding of my teaching grew, I naturally began to consider the bigger picture and longer-term goals.

In reflecting on cycles one and two, I was conscious of wanting to develop an approach to planning my sessions which would provide all students with sufficient support. One of the limitations of the module in question is that it is delivered to a large cohort of students across seven different groups. I concluded that a more structured approach to planning would ensure that all students get an equal level of support and interaction, regardless of what group they are in. Furthermore, implementing a structure which necessitates that time be dedicated to interactive activities during every session gives students the reassurance that they will consistently have opportunities for discussion and engagement throughout the course of the module.

During both cycles, the data collection method MSCSs were used to give students an opportunity to identify when they noticed a change in their own behaviours. It was notable

that many students identified particular sessions as the catalyst for their personal change, whereas others indicated that they noticed change either at the outset of the module or closer to the end. This led me to conclude that different sessions or topics will pique different students' interests, and that students will need varying lengths of time to develop their interest and commitment levels. For this reason, I wanted to ensure that all sessions included opportunities for students to develop the variety of skills and dispositions that I hoped to cultivate, as it was clear that student engagement levels varied from session to session depending on their interest in the topic at hand.

Having a structured approach to planning allows me to keep my teaching student-centred by ensuring that I am meeting the needs of students while also staying true to the values of GE. Additionally, I am conscious that large student numbers are common in ITE programmes and that modules being delivered by multiple lecturers is not uncommon. By developing a structured approach to be implemented across the full module, I was reassured that there would be consistency for students and that other teacher educators would also be balancing content, skills and values within each lesson.

7.3 The Planning Tool

I use the metaphor of a funnel to present the *Planning Tool* (Figure 12). The funnel represents the **pre-conditions for learning** which scaffold students learning, namely relationships, values and environment. Within the funnel are the **lesson elements** which include both what happens (namely indirect and direct teaching, individual work, group work, and whole class work), and how it happens (by focusing on challenging content, personalising issues, honouring all voices, and collective responsibility), in every lesson to enable students to develop their critical global learning skills. Finally, the anticipated **outcomes** which emerge at the base of the funnel include personal outcomes, module assessment and professional outcomes.

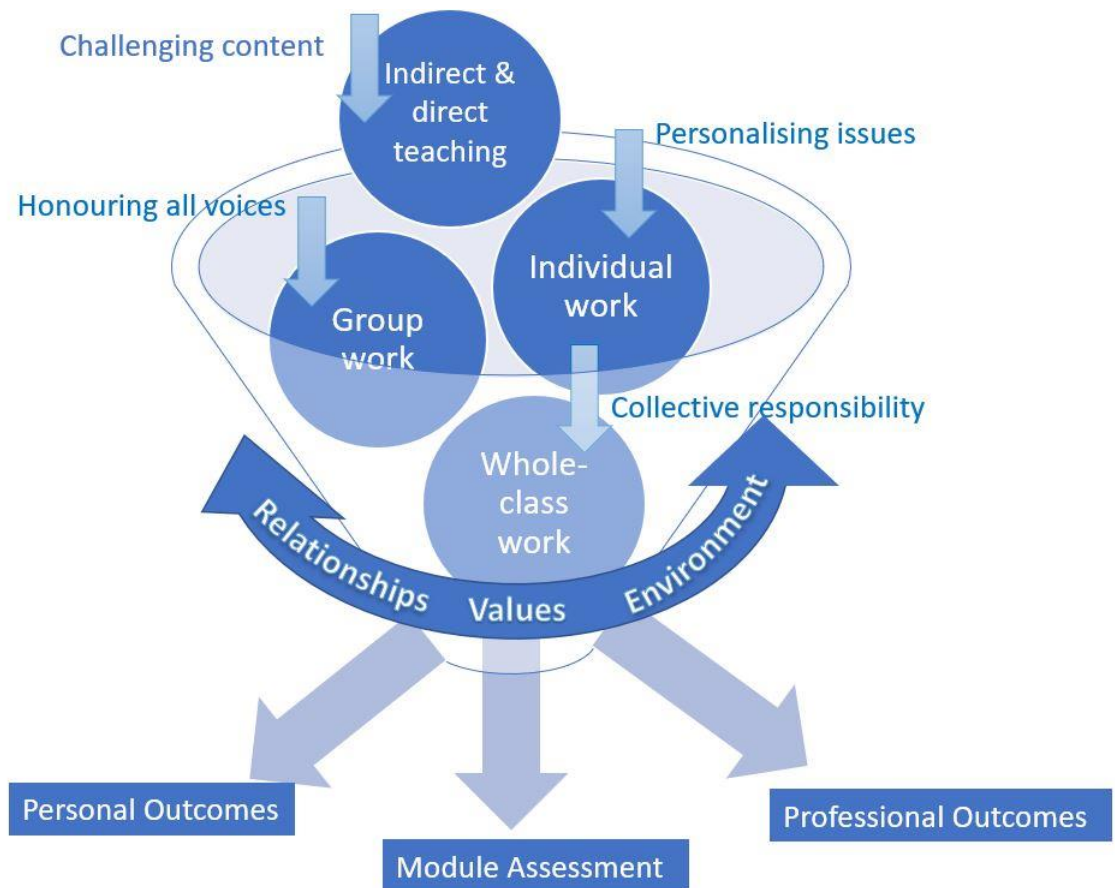


Figure 12: The Planning Tool

The overall structure of the *Planning Tool* enabled me to focus systematically on consistency in my planning and teaching. The lesson elements and the pre-conditions for learning detail practical actions necessary to implement the tool. These were developed in response to findings from cycles one and two, conversations with critical friends, personal reflections, and an in-depth review of literature. The *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* presented in Chapters Four and Nine continuously evolved as my understanding of critical global learning progressed. While the core skills had been established prior to cycle one, the arc detailing the influencing factors and considerations is the end result of further literature review which I engaged in when developing the *Planning Tool*.

In particular, the development of the *Planning Tool* drew influence from Freire's conceptualisation of praxis. Freire (1970, p.60) defined praxis as "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed". He (ibid) conceptualises praxis as a dialogical approach which enables people who engage in it to acquire critical consciousness of their

own lives and their place in the wider world. I was conscious from findings within the first two cycles that students struggled at times to authentically connect their learning to their own lives, and so I deliberately included ‘personalising issues’ as an approach to one of the lesson elements within the tool. Additionally, I endeavoured to honour Freire’s (1970 p.61) contention that “human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection” through centring opportunities for dialogue and interaction in the lesson elements included within the funnel. The lesson elements provide opportunities for discussion both in small groups and at whole-class level. This focus was included as previous cycles highlighted the importance of providing opportunities for interaction as students’ learning progressed significantly when they engaged pro-actively with their learning and viewed their ideas in the context of other perspectives. Finally, ‘challenging content’ was included as the teaching approach to ensure the focus remained on content which pushed students beyond their comfort zones and helped them to question their pre-conceptions. Furthermore, in detailing the conditions for praxis Freire (1970) discusses the need for individuals engaged in dialogue to act with humility and respect for each other. In this way, his contentions have also informed the pre-conditions for learning included in the *Planning Tool*.

7.3.1 Pre-conditions for learning

The three pre-conditions for learning within the *Planning Tool* are the foundations upon which lessons are to be built. They constitute the necessary circumstances to enable students to get the most out of their learning. While they take inspiration from my findings from cycles one and two, they were refined through engagement with literature and subsequently also appear as one of the ‘considerations for teaching’ within the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*.

7.3.1.1 Relationships

Noddings (2003) describes teaching as a ‘relational practice’. She (ibid) posits that many of the positive outcomes from education come as a result of relationships, with the examples of “the feeling of safety in a thoughtful teacher’s classroom, a growing intellectual enthusiasm in both teacher and student, the challenge and satisfaction shared by both in engaging new material, the awakening sense (for both) that teaching and life are

never-ending moral quests” (Noddings, 2003 p.249). Similarly, I found that building relationships with students was an element of my teaching that was important for supporting student learning during cycles one and two, thus I wanted to ensure that it was embedded within the *Planning Tool*. I found that when students felt a connection with me, they were more likely to engage with the content being explored. Additionally, it was clear that my disposition as a teacher educator was critical in supporting the development of my relationship with students. Students indicated this in surveys and focus groups, stating that they appreciated the energy, enthusiasm and passion that I approached lectures with, which helped them to engage with me and the content we were exploring. Furthermore, Maria, who observed my teaching throughout the cycles, described how she believed I promoted and nurtured respectful relationships in the classroom:

It is so much part of what you do, from the moment they were coming in, you were chatting to them, you were smiling, you were moving around, it was very inclusive, it was very warm, it was a very relaxed atmosphere and yet you demand the respect too, as soon as you started teaching you wait for silence and expect it.

The approaches mentioned in Maria’s description were those that I instinctively drew upon. However, I wanted to ensure that I included specific strategies going forward to make sure that I was consistently and consciously focusing on developing my relationship with my students rather than relying on instinct. Furthermore, by focusing on relationships within my practice, I aimed to respond to established literature and research which informed the considerations for teaching shared in Chapter Four, with the knowledge that building relationships with learners can support educators to ensure their practice is intentionally inviting (Purkey and Novak, 2015).

7.3.1.2 *Environment*

The learning environment includes both physical and psychosocial conditions that influence learning and engagement in the classroom (Baars et al., 2020). During cycles one and two I attempted to make use of the learning environment to support student engagement, however, I found that my efforts were not always successful, and I often tried something new every week. In preparing for cycle three, I implemented approaches to support the learning environment that did not encroach unnecessarily timewise, and which allowed me to develop a routine that students could rely on for each session. Lambert

(2011 p.28) uses the term psycho classrooms in which the design and use of space works to “disrupt and redistribute what forms of knowledge might be sayable, audible, visible and do-able”. With the aim of encouraging deeper reflections and more frequent interactive discussions, I aimed to use the classroom environment in this way.

In higher education it is often not possible to have control over the physical environment as you may not always be teaching in the same room. This had hampered my efforts to influence the physical learning environment during cycles one and two, however, I secured a regular teaching space during cycle three which opened more possibilities for me. Displays (Appendix R) were used to reinforce the explicit teaching and learning happening in the classroom and promote peripheral learning (Muijs and Reynolds, 2018).

7.3.1.3 Values

GE has a strong values dimension and, consequently the use of a values-lens in exploring global justice issues was included as a key skill in Chapter Four. While the development of values is often cited as a core outcome for GE, values also play an important role in supporting student receptivity to global learning. The pre-existing values that students bring to the classroom can be either barriers or enablers to their learning. The deficit model of education assumes that facts will speak for themselves and will unfailingly convince people to change their understanding and attitudes towards an issue (Seethaler et al., 2019). However, communication and learning can truly break down when educators fail to account for learners’ values (Seethaler et al., 2019).

From cycles one and two, it was clear that at times there was a tension between the values being promoted within the modules and the values held by some of the students. This impacted on their learning and engagement. Conscious of this tension, I endeavoured not to shut out divergent values but to provide opportunities for students to share and discuss values that ran counter to those of the module. This provided opportunities to share counterarguments or explicitly state where values being shared diverged from a human rights framework and commitment to justice.

Topics such as gender, racism and sustainability tend to provoke strong opinions in students that reflect a range of values not always aligned with those of GE. By providing

opportunities such as participation in walking debates or ranking exercises, students have the opportunity to discuss and share their perspectives in the context of those of their classmates, in line with a social-constructivist approach (Vygotsky, 1978). These approaches often help students to recognise where their opinions may be founded on a different values-base than that of their classmates. Where counterarguments do not emerge from their classmates, I would step in and share alternative perspectives on topics, or ask probing questions to support students in recognising the underlying values informing their perspectives. In this way, I wanted to ensure that students came to recognise where their own values were acting as barriers or enablers in their engagement with GE and the development of their criticality.

In designing the *Planning Tool*, I wanted to ensure that values were consistently threaded through all interactions with students. Thus, I included an awareness of values as a pre-condition for learning by deliberately adopting strategies that enabled me to be responsive to students while still retaining a focus on the key values of GE.

7.3.2 Lesson elements

As outlined earlier in the chapter, the lesson elements evolved from the challenges encountered during cycles one and two, are informed by literature, and were refined through critical conversations with colleagues. Furthermore, throughout cycles one and two I was frustrated that erratic attendance and unpredictable interest levels meant that not all students engaged meaningfully with the development of the range of critical global learning skills I wanted them to develop. While acknowledging that attendance rates and interest levels are often beyond my control, I wanted to mitigate against the potentially harmful impact on students' learning. My frustration led me to realise the gaps in my practice, which prompted me to develop the lesson elements within the *Planning Tool* to address these challenges. The inclusion of all four elements in each session ensures that all students have the opportunity to interact meaningfully with each of the lesson elements throughout the module, regardless of attendance or differing levels of interest, depending on the topic.

The elements are designed to be included in all lessons, and include both what happens (written on the balls within the funnel) and how (the arrows entering the balls in the

funnel). The lesson elements are: 1. Indirect and direct teaching realised through a focus on challenging content, 2. Group work realised through honouring all voices, 3. Individual work focused on personalising issues, and 4. Whole-class work focused on collective responsibility. Depending on the session, each element might have a more or less significant role each time. However, in planning for each session, the aim is to consider ways to include all four. While it may be ambitious to do this in forty-five-minute sessions, this structure responds to the challenges identified in cycles one and two by providing opportunities for engagement in a variety of ways in every session and ensuring that I can focus on providing ambitious yet achievable opportunities for criticality. The combination of the four lesson elements aligns with Ennis' (1989) infusion approach to teaching critical thinking. The infusion approach combines a focus on subject-matter instruction with explicit teaching of critical thinking skills through emphasising thinking critically about the subject-matter being explored (Ennis, 1989). This approach supports students to acquire critical thinking skills through a joint focus on teacher modelling of criticality in practice and providing time for students to practice their skills supported by feedback (Bensley and Spero, 2014).

Finally, the development of these lesson elements draws inspiration from the sequential conceptual framework designed by Andreotti and deSouza (2008a) for the resource TOE. As outlined in Chapter Four, their framework includes four steps: learning to unlearn, learning to listen, learning to learn, and learning to reach out. As each lesson element is explained further the connections to Andreotti and deSouza's framework will be outlined.

7.3.2.1 Direct and Indirect Teaching: Challenging content

Within this lesson element, students engage with information which may disrupt or challenge their established beliefs or ideas about the world. This focus on content aims to enable students to begin the process of learning to unlearn 'status quo stories' (Keating, 2007) or challenge common stereotypes by broadening their understanding of the world.

This lesson element is linked to the first step in Andreotti and deSouza's (2008a) conceptual framework, learning to unlearn. They (2008b, p.29) state that "learning to unlearn is about making connections between social-historical processes and encounters that have shaped our contexts, and cultures, and the construction of our knowledges and

identities”. As a result, this lesson element consistently includes explicit focus on the power relationships which have shaped and influenced the topic being discussed. This is done through mindful selection of resources and deliberate design and use of prompts, questions, and statements while exploring content. Furthermore, Andreotti and deSouza (2008a, p.3) highlight the need to deconstruct status quo stories about the world during this step by “making visible the origins and hidden agendas of taken for granted concepts”. Consequently, it is crucial that within this lesson element, students not only engage with new information but are supported to consider it in light of the ways in which it differs from commonly held beliefs about the topic in question. Depending on the topic and teaching methodology being used, this may be explicitly discussed through direct teaching or may indirectly emerge naturally as a result of student engagement with content in light of prompts or activities provided.

7.3.2.2 Group Work: Honouring all voices

During cycles one and two I noticed that there was often a significant disparity in the participation levels from different students. The same voices were heard repeatedly, while other students were noticeably silent week after week. Therefore, this lesson element is designed to ensure there is a structure in place to provide opportunities for all students to participate and share their opinions during each session. This is done by providing dedicated time during every session for students to work in small groups on a set task where all members of the group are asked to contribute. This provides opportunities for students to hear others’ opinions and experiences which can be helpful in supporting them to broaden their understandings and awareness. Additionally, for students who typically remain silent during whole-class work, having the opportunity to voice ideas in a small group setting initially makes it easier to then share ideas with the larger group. As part of the pre-condition for learning related to the classroom environment, students are already sitting in small groups which helps to facilitate the implementation of this lesson element.

Furthermore, this lesson element supports the facilitation of highly interactive teaching which can be challenging with groups of sixty students as it is not possible to have in-depth conversations or give one-to-one support to all students within the larger group. Good and Brophy (2008, p.182) posit that “small group formats also hold potential for contributing to students’ sense of belonging and community, which may enhance commitment to

schooling”. Therefore, this lesson element provides a mechanism to support students’ interaction and ensure opportunities are consistently provided for all students to engage with content, practice skill development, and express opinions. Within smaller groups, students can also engage in peer-evaluation and feedback to supplement the support which a teacher educator would be able to give more readily in smaller group sizes.

This lesson element is linked to the second step in Andreotti and deSouza’s (2008a) conceptual framework, learning to listen. This step is important in supporting students to “learn to recognise the effects and limits of our perspective, and to be receptive to new understandings of the world” (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008b, p.29). By working in small groups, hearing the perspectives of classmates and working together to question and challenge both the lesson content and each other’s contributions, students are supported to develop a habit of consistently scrutinising what they hear and read. In this way, students learn to recognise the limitations of relying only on their own assumptions, and to consider different perspectives on topics.

7.3.2.3 Individual Work: Personalising issues

The inclusion of this lesson element affords students the opportunity to link the issues to their own lives and reflect on their reactions to the information and ideas they engage with as part of the learning process. Acknowledging and reflecting on personal reactions supports students to develop a better understanding, and promotes more frequent exploration of their personal opinions and values. This element of lessons supports students to reflect on why they embrace some ideas, while finding others more difficult to accept. Ultimately, encouraging students to personalise issues enables them to develop feelings of empathy and responsibility and to engage with issues on a deeper level.

This lesson element is linked to the third step in Andreotti and deSouza’s (2008a) conceptual framework, learning to learn. The process of learning to learn facilitates students to engage in a process of applying new learning to their own lives in order to re-arrange, expand and deepen their own perspectives and understandings about the world (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008b). During this process, students are encouraged to consider issues not only from their own perspective but to try to see ‘through other eyes’ (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008a) to broaden and enhance their own understanding and empathy within

a broader context. This lesson element can cause discomfort for students who are asked to confront their own biases and privileges in light of the perspectives of others. In applying this element to lessons, I embrace a ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ (Boler, 1999) by asking students to adopt an open-minded and flexible approach to examining their own lives and perspectives.

7.3.2.4 Whole-Class Work: Collective responsibility

This lesson element provides opportunities for students to share their ideas with the whole group, either as individuals or on behalf of their smaller groups, following a task or activity completed at their tables. This affords students the opportunity to hear from a wider variety of voices than those sitting at their tables. Critically, by including opportunities where students are asked to feedback or share with the whole group in every session, they are encouraged to remain engaged throughout the entirety of the session in order to be able to participate in this element. The core purpose of the inclusion of this lesson element in every session is to counteract the tendency for some students to disengage from the learning during sessions through ensuring that they are accountable for their engagement and learning in some way. Additionally, by consistently asking students to share their perspectives and ideas with the whole group, I aim to instil in students the message that not only are they expected to contribute but that their contributions have value within the classroom.

This lesson element draws inspiration from the final step in Andreotti and deSouza’s (2008a) conceptual framework, learning to reach out. This process supports students to experience what happens when they expose themselves to difference by sharing their own perspectives and hearing those of other people. The process of reaching out often results in mutual teaching and mutual learning through the sharing of different perspectives (Andreotti and deSouza, 2008b). According to Andreotti and deSouza (2008b, p.29) “learning to reach out is about learning to engage, to learn and to teach with respect and accountability”. By ‘reaching out’ in the context of the classroom, students should be better prepared to reach out in other contexts and learn from others in other aspects of their lives. Westwood (2015 p.174) posits that when engaged in large group teaching, utilising methodologies to capture and interpret large volumes of feedback in a short time “ensures a high rate of interactive participation by all students”.

7.3.3 Outcomes

There are three categories of outcomes included in the *Planning Tool*: personal outcomes, professional outcomes, and module assessments. The module assessment embodies the visible and measurable outcomes from the module, while the personal and professional outcomes for students are likely to remain less visible and be complex or unfeasible to accurately quantify. However, while the module assessment reflects students' competence at a moment in time, it does not indicate the extent to which they are likely to transfer their learning to their lives beyond the module. In contrast, the personal and professional outcomes for students relate to the longer-term impact that the module can have for students' lives beyond the module.

The module assessment which was used in cycle two was helpful in providing evidence of where students' perceptions of issues evolved and afforded them the opportunity to reflect on their personal understandings and values. This enabled me to assess where their learning reflected growth, and I was able to identify where they could demonstrate, or not, many of the critical thinking skills and disposition from the Chapter Four. This facilitated me in considering the effectiveness of the module as a whole in meeting its objectives, and to consider where changes were needed. As a result of the success of this assessment approach, I used the same assessment, with more explicit instructions and questions in cycle three.

This summative assessment requires students to consider how their learning has progressed and to reflect on their perspectives as a result of participation in the module. It also supports me to assess the effectiveness of the module. However, the overarching objective of the module is to have an impact both personally and professionally for students regardless of whether or not these can be easily measured or tracked. The module is designed to support students to develop their critical thinking skills which, it is hoped, should impact their lives both personally and professionally. While students often focus on their professional development, they don't usually link their development as classroom teachers with the personal development they engage in during the module through the exploration of values, attitudes and skills which can support them to become more reflective and engaged classroom teachers.

The personal development students experience can be observed through their contributions to the module by the language they use, the questions they ask and the comments they make. Very often these contributions can reveal students' underlying attitudes and values and reflect any learning journey they have taken. However, personal development is not always straight forward to measure or observe as the impact the module has will be unique for each student and can take time to manifest as students continue to think about issues explored in class. This means that the results may not be visible within the life cycle of the module.

Professionally, it is hoped that students adopt a critical thinking approach within their own teaching as a result of their participation in this module. Throughout the course of their engagement with global education, students are encouraged to consider how they could apply their learning to the primary school classroom both through distinct lessons and through the values, attitudes and dispositions that they embody and share with their own pupils. While students have the opportunity to reflect on these questions during modules, the reality of how they choose to implement their learning is only visible when they enter their classrooms as classroom teachers. It is beyond the scope of this module to track or observe how students choose to apply their learning to their professional practices.

7.4 Conclusion

The *Planning Tool* is designed to provide educators with a mechanism to plan for effective critical global learning in line with the skills and dispositions outlined in Chapter Four. Furthermore, the *Planning Tool* responds to the challenges which emerged within cycles one and two, as outlined in Chapter Six. Appendix S includes a table showing how the *Planning Tool* maps onto the challenges which emerged in relation to the core commitment, skills and outcomes from the model to achieve this. Its development was guided by data from cycles one and two in addition to research from a variety of authors through the literature review, the result of which is the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, explored in Chapters Four and Nine. The *Planning Tool* was implemented during cycle three of data collection and used by both myself and Anna to plan for the overall module and individual lessons. The outcomes from cycle three will be discussed in the next chapter.

8 Findings from Action Research Cycle Three

8.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the outcomes from action research cycle three and follows the same approach as Chapter Six by using the core dispositions, skills, and considerations in relation to outcomes identified in Chapter Four as a structure against which to present my findings. The focus of this chapter is on presenting the impact which the *Planning Tool* had on my implementation of these dispositions and skills. Throughout this chapter I outline the findings from cycle three, and where appropriate will compare them to previous cycles to show the impact of the *Planning Tool* on learning outcomes for students. Similar to Chapter Six, I also include the challenges and considerations I encountered when implementing the *Planning Tool* alongside its successes, a summary of which can be seen in Table 7. The challenges encountered during cycle three predominantly related to implementing the tool for the first time and getting accustomed to using it.

| Key skills and dispositions developed and module outcomes | Successes | Challenges and considerations |
|--|--|--|
| Core disposition: Commitment to criticality | students showed an increased interest in critical thinking and desire to develop their personal critical thinking skills in comparison with previous cycles | Consideration 1: the impact of external factors on students critical thinking Consideration 2: Conceptualising the developing of critical thinking as a gradual process |
| Skill 1: develop and use a global learning knowledge base | Students indicated that the challenging way in which information was presented helped them to retain and apply it. | Challenge: Lecturer's knowledge base impacts on the teaching students receive |
| Skill 2: Learn to question orthodoxies | The planning tool supported me to model this skill and provided students with opportunities to practice it. | Challenge: Finding the right pace to appropriately and effectively support students to develop their questioning skills |
| Skill 3: Engage in self-reflection | Opportunities to reflect helped students feel that their voices and individual perspectives were authentically valued in the classroom | Challenge: some students were on a journey towards learning that their ideas and opinions are valid |
| Skill 4: Use a values-lens when exploring issues of global justice | The planning tool supported me to be consistently mindful of the values I aimed to promote in my teaching. | Challenge: students can draw on and apply diverging values-lenses when approaching topics |
| Outcomes: Personal, professional, societal | Students indicated that the most significant way they could have an impact on society was through their teaching, supported by their newly developed critical thinking skills. | Consideration: Critical thinking as conscious versus unconscious, as visible versus silent |

Table 7: Summary of findings from cycle 3

Findings revealed that the key success of the *Planning Tool* was in promoting and maintaining student motivation and engagement generally, which supported students to develop the skills and dispositions I sought to impart. Additionally, it became clear that the *Planning Tool* was not the only factor which determined students' learning outcomes. Prior to sharing the impact of the *Planning Tool* on students' acquisition of each of the skills, I will briefly outline how my teaching approach was a defining factor in the success of the *Planning Tool*. Furthermore, I will discuss how external factors such as students' prior experiences and societal influences impacted on students' learning. In this chapter, I include descriptions of activities used when implementing the lesson elements of the

Planning Tool in order to highlight how they supported student acquisition of the skill-set and core disposition outlined in Chapter Four. As will be evident throughout the chapter, many of the strategies used to implement the tool were similar to those used in cycles one and two. However, when employed within the context of the *Planning Tool* they each served a specific purpose that fits within an overall vision for the module and my teaching. In this way, the same activities were used with purpose rather than because they were familiar to me or fitted within a specific lesson. A similar key to that used in Chapter Six is used to identify data sources (Figure 13).

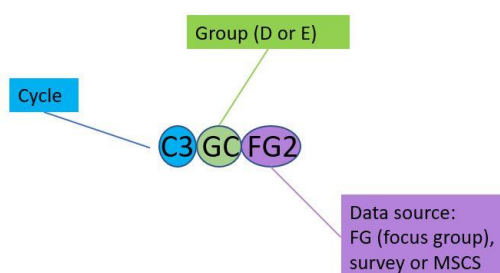


Figure 13: Key for Identifying Data Sources

8.2 Implementing the Planning Tool

The *Planning Tool* was implemented across a twelve-week module by both myself and Anna. From the outset, we jointly planned for the overall module and then designed individual sessions to fit within our broader goals. This allowed us to ensure the challenging content we shared was focused and located appropriately, and did not overflow into entire sessions without leaving time and space for focusing on the other lesson elements in the *Planning Tool* which facilitate student engagement with the content. We discussed indicative activities that we might use in each session in relation to the lesson elements. However, these were largely decided on a week-to-week basis as we got to know our students better and observed what methodologies were working best and where we felt we could push them further or where more support was needed.

Additionally, before the module began, we planned how we would attend to the conditions for learning from the *Planning Tool*. To do this, we each shared our own experiences, ideas and often observed each other teaching. This collaborative approach was a significant

factor which supported the success of our implementation of the tool. We discussed the ways in which we intended to build relationships with students while ensuring our teaching embodied the values of GE. Large student numbers were a barrier to developing relationships because in any given week we could be working with over five hundred students from two or three different year groups and sometimes from two or three different programmes. We could not rely on remembering names or details about individual students to support relationship building, and so we developed strategies to overcome this. Consistently, implementing the following four strategies did not require any additional time beyond what is allocated for lectures, but they did create conditions for relationship building within the classroom:

1. Always saying hello and making small talk with students as they entered the room and took their seats in the few minutes before sessions started;
2. Attendance for each session was taken when students were engaged in a task in their groups by going to each table and personally taking the attendance. During this time, students heard us say each of their names and learn how to pronounce them. Additionally, this was an opportunity to discuss the task at hand, the module as a whole, or questions they had in relation to the assessment. In this way each student had the opportunity to have a brief conversation with their lecturer during each session;
3. All students were asked to display their names on their desks throughout lectures. This allowed us to make the teaching and learning experience more personal by using students' names when talking to them without needing to learn hundreds of names;
4. At the conclusion of every session, always thanking students sincerely for their participation and making time to be available for students for any follow up questions or discussions.

We also discussed how to utilise the learning environment to best support students' critical global learning. From previous cycles, we learned that when students are seated in large groups, it can be easy for some students to dominate tasks and discussions, while others remain silent. We decided that students would sit in groups no larger than four. This ensured that all members of the group had opportunities to contribute to activities and discussion, and reduced opportunities for disengagement. We arranged the classroom to reflect this and reminded students before every class, as they were entering the room of required group sizes. To further support engagement within the small groups, we also made table packs available to groups that were relevant to each session. Within each pack

there were relevant worksheets, quotes, prompts or questions to keep them on task, and individual whiteboards, markers, paper, and voting sticks (red, orange, green) for quick visual responses to questions. This provided students with prompts for the session and multiple means of engagement throughout the sessions. To further utilise the physical learning environment, we hung relevant displays in the classroom (Appendix R). Displays that related to key messages of the modules were then used as quick reference points and reminders for us and students during sessions. They were also used to prompt critical questions, inspire alternative ways of thinking, reinforce the use of human rights frameworks, and reiterate the key messages that everyone brought valid knowledge to the space and that all knowledge could be questioned.

We also identified key approaches to support the psychosocial learning environment for students. During the first session in the module, we spent time outlining our expectations for the way we would work together during the module and asked for their input in return. We did this in cycles one and two and found it useful, however in cycle three we committed to recapping on them at the beginning of every session. The commitments we reiterate at the beginning of each session are to be respectful, to be open-minded, and to participate. I also took that opportunity to share any relevant announcements or reminders for students. The second thing I began doing during cycle two and continued into cycle three was to begin every session with a quick reflection based on a quote or poem relevant to the session. Below is an example of one reflection from October 2019 which followed the same loose formula every week:

We're going to start as we normally do with the reflection. I want you all to make sure you're sitting quietly and comfortably and that there's nothing in your hands. You don't need pen or paper or water bottle right now, I will also take this opportunity to remind you to make sure your phone is not out on the table and not causing a distraction. When we're all sitting quietly and comfortably, we will begin. This is your opportunity to decide to let go of whatever else is going on, to decide to show up and participate for the next 45 minutes. Your thoughts and conversations will still be there at the end of the session, but you can decide to put them aside and give your attention to your classmates and to me and to yourself for the duration of the session. This week's session is about migration and we're going to read a poem for our reflection. The poem was written by Rupi Kaur and is called First Generation Immigrant. It says "they have no idea what it is like to lose home at the risk of never finding home again have your entire life split between two lands and become the bridge between two countries".

Once I had read the quote to students, I would then begin the session by linking the quote to what I wanted them to think about and focus on for that particular session. Reflections were designed to help students focus their minds on the upcoming session and set their intentions to participate in each session from the outset in order to get the most out of it.

The final pre-condition for learning from the *Planning Tool* is an attention to values, which we included by deliberately adopting strategies that enabled us to be responsive to students while still retaining a focus on the key values of GE. Some of the strategies we adopted included:

1. The introduction session for the module began with a collective agreement to adopting an open-minded approach to learning and a commitment to growth and change, this is referred to frequently throughout the module;
2. Reflections at the beginning of each session were used to focus on the values inherent in the topic being explored, which were usually explicitly stated during the reflection;
3. Explicitly stating the inherent values in what we were discussing and inviting alternative perspectives;
4. Human Rights based frameworks were on display in the room and used as a reference point during discussions;
5. Asking probing questions to scaffold students in developing their awareness of the values set they are drawing on in formulating their responses;
6. Using values-based language in my responses to students by using statements such as “from a human rights perspective...” or “with a justice or equality framework I see it differently because...”;
7. Providing students with opportunities to consider, share and discuss their perspectives and values within every session;
8. Providing opportunities to consider reflective questions privately.

These strategies allowed students to reflect on their personal values, while ensuring that there were opportunities to respond to values or perspectives that might be in conflict with those promoted in the module.

8.3 Teaching Approach as a Factor in Implementing the Planning Tool

While the focus of this study is on the approaches utilised within a specific module, I often talked in abstract terms with students about teaching approaches more generally which either supported or hindered their learning and critical thinking development.

Depersonalising the conversation allowed the focus to be on supporting their learning rather than placing them in the uncomfortable position of reviewing my practices while I was their lecturer. However, as will be seen from the data shared in this chapter, students often offered feedback and comments specifically about the approaches Anna and I used.

It was clear from analysing the data that for the *Planning Tool* to come alive, it was not only dependent on what happened in the classroom, but on how it was facilitated. One student summed this up in a focus group interview by stating that “*There’s no harm in just being nice, for myself I can see a real connection between the subjects I like and engage in and the lecturer, their compassion*” (C3GDFG1). Similar to findings from previous cycles, it was clear from students’ comments that they considered lecturer’ temperament towards their students and the subject matter as a key factor in determining their engagement levels. Discussing this, two students talked about how my approach as an educator made them feel as a student in my classroom:

Student 2: I suppose how enthusiastic you are. And you're not pushing these things on people either.

Student 1: Yeah, it's like encouragement without pressure. Making students feel comfortable but at the same time encouraging them to participate. A lot of it depends on the demeanour of the lecturer, I think.

(C3GDFG3)

Other students reiterated the importance of lecturers being enthusiastic about what they are teaching, stating that “*if someone is interested in what they're doing and they actually seem enthusiastic it's nearly contagious, you feel enthusiastic about it as well*” (C3GDFG2). As evidenced by these quotes, the atmosphere created in the classroom by the teacher educator through a focus on the pre-conditions for learning from the *Planning Tool* can be critical in supporting students to feel comfortable and want to learn. While I

was aware of this from previous cycles, the *Planning Tool* enabled me to intentionally focus my attention on enhancing my approach by focusing on relationships, values, and environment through the pre-conditions for learning. Furthermore, when I was reflecting on sessions that I felt were successful during this cycle, I noted that a key determinant of success was how I approached the session. When reflecting in October 2019 on a successful session that I found challenging to prepare for, I listed three factors which I felt supported the positive outcomes of the session:

1. *My confidence – I had confidence in what I was teaching. I felt I understood it and believed in what I was saying and trusted the format was the best we could offer;*
2. *My teaching style – I worked hard to tell it as a story and be engaging and not just read information from slides. This took a lot of energy, but I think it is what made the biggest difference in students’ attention and engagement;*
3. *Honesty – I told students from the outset that this would be an unusual session in that it would be mostly me delivering and I asked them for their attention for it in a more intense way than I normally would.*

I worked hard to be energetic and enthusiastic in my delivery of that session, and I observed increased attention from students in comparison to other sessions. Good and Brophy (2008) posit that enthusiasm from educators leads to greater engagement and higher achievement levels for learners. A key learning for me from this reflection is the acknowledgement that to successfully implement the *Planning Tool* and support students to develop the skills and dispositions to be critical global learners, it requires hard work. It was not a passive process to implement the *Planning Tool*, but necessitated considered preparation, focused attention, and a level of energy in the delivery style. I return to this conversation in my discussion in Chapter Ten.

8.4 Student Motivation and Engagement as the Key Outcome of the Planning Tool

One of the key successes of the *Planning Tool* was in supporting students to feel comfortable in the classroom and enthusiastic about learning. As the module progressed, I observed that the biggest impact that using the *Planning Tool* was having was on student motivation and engagement. During previous cycles, my focus had been predominantly on the knowledge and skills I wanted students to develop rather than ensuring that I was

creating the best conditions for learning. It quickly became clear to me that focusing on developing and maintaining student motivation and engagement was a critical precursor to them developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions the module sought to engender.

From the outset of the module, Anna and I both noticed not only greater engagement from students, but also greater depth and reflection in their answers and contributions during class than we had seen during previous iterations of the module. One of the key factors to which we attributed this success was through offering multiple ways for students to engage with the content and have their voices heard in each session. The lesson elements of the *Planning Tool* helped us to ensure that, in each session, students could expect to be asked to reflect or contribute individually, in small groups, and as part of the whole class. We captured these contributions in multiple ways by asking for responses orally, on individual whiteboards, on sticky notes, on virtual platforms, or using voting sticks. Individual whiteboards and voting sticks were newly introduced in this cycle. Both were very successful in gathering inputs from a large number of students simultaneously and so increased opportunities for students to contribute during classes. Figure 14 includes examples of the variety of ways in which students contributed during classes.

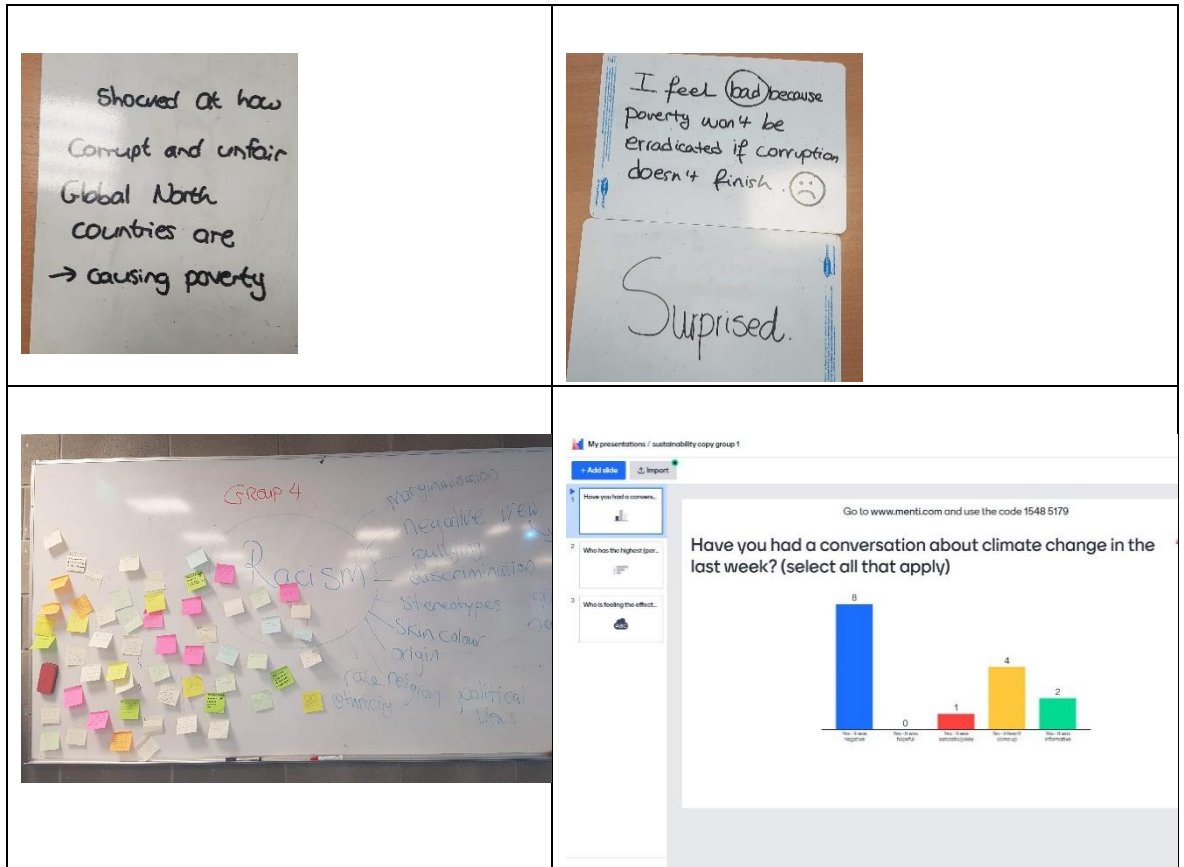


Figure 14: Examples of Student Contributions

The above examples showcase the way in which Ennis' (1989) infusion approach was used to provide opportunities for student to explicitly practice critical thinking skills in the context of topics being explored. Different approaches were useful for different purposes, some lent themselves more towards self-reflection, while others helped students to question orthodoxies or consider the values implicit in what they were engaging with. Having quick methodologies, such as voting sticks and digital surveys, throughout classes ensured students were practicing their criticality skills while also keeping them engaged. Quick strategies were combined with those that required more time and in-depth reflection such as written responses to vary the levels of criticality as students' comfort levels developed. The importance of offering multiple and diverse opportunities to contribute during classes was captured well by one student who stated that:

I think we get to do so much interactive and group work and it's not all just sit there and put up your hand with an answer or ... I feel like a lot of people are given opportunities if they didn't want to talk in front of the whole class, they still have an opportunity to get their opinion across. The different methodologies has already

made it open to a lot of different learners and styles.
(C3GDFG3)

Furthermore, students indicated that when they had opportunities to practice sharing their perspectives throughout multiple classes and in a variety of ways, this helped them to build their confidence and continue to increase their engagement as the module progressed. One student highlighted this by stating that *“If you keep doing it like, you get more comfortable with it”* (C3GEFG1). While other students described the impact group work had on their confidence, stating that when they had the opportunity to discuss topics in small groups first, they gained confidence to then offer opinions in front of the whole class.

The aspect I observed as the most significant contributor to continued student engagement was the opportunity to contribute ideas and answers in ways that allowed for a level of anonymity which encouraged depth and honesty and enabled students to situate their ideas in context of those of the wider class. This approach supported students to move out of their comfort zones in a supported way. Critical global learning asks students to move beyond their comfort zones, which can be challenging. The use of methodologies such as the whiteboards provided a stepping stone for students to move into more uncomfortable spaces without feeling too exposed. In a conversation with Anna in December 2019 we reflected on the success of using individual whiteboards as a way for students to contribute during classes without feeling under pressure. I noted that *“often I found that students would hold up a board but not make eye contact with me, knowing I could read it out, they could distance themselves from what they had written but still be heard”*. Anna, confirming she had noticed this too, added that she found the whiteboards helped her to acknowledge a wide variety of responses very quickly, something that wasn't possible previously with the large groups. Additionally, we often used content on the whiteboards as the basis for discussion, and students were asked clarifying or probing questions. We agreed during our conversations that this approach had kept classes more dynamic than previous years.

Ultimately, I found that when students were more consistently engaged in each lesson, they were more receptive to the content being shared and more likely to develop the skills and dispositions being promoted. Students knew that when they came to GE classes, they could expect a dynamic and active teaching approach which encouraged them to take

responsibility for their own learning rather than passive delivery of information. This is highlighted by one student who stated that: “*criticality happens every week because there are always debates at the tables and things to talk about and think differently about*” (C3GDFG3).

8.5 Impact of the Planning Tool on Student Acquisition of the Core Critical Global Learning Disposition and Skills

I draw on the core disposition, skillset, and consideration of outcomes identified in Chapter Four as a structure against which to report on student outcomes.

From data analysis, it was clear that the majority of students felt the module had a significant, positive impact on their critical thinking skills. Across focus groups and surveys, many students talked about the way in which the structured approach supported them to incrementally develop their criticality throughout the module. Students also indicated that they really appreciated the opportunity to practice criticality in the classroom rather than being asked to do it without being shown how. When discussing this during a focus group, one student indicated that “*you need real life experience of critical thinking before you can just sit down and do it*” (C3GDFG2). The introduction of the *Planning Tool* in cycle three increased opportunities for students to practice their critical thinking during class time and as a result provided rich and plentiful evidence of students engaging in critical global learning skills. Indeed, through surveys 100% of students reported that they felt the lesson elements of the *Planning Tool* supported their engagement and critical thinking development.

When presenting findings in this chapter, I draw comparisons between the outcomes for students which emerged in cycles one and two and how these differed from findings in cycle three following the implementation of the *Planning Tool*. While students across all three cycles often self-reported high levels of criticality, both Anna and I agreed that there was a disparity between their self-reported levels and what we observed in practice and through assignments in cycles one and two. Anna and I were able to clearly identify changes in students’ criticality during classes in cycle three. This disparity between

students reported levels of criticality and those that Anna and I observed during the first two cycles is mirrored in Mertler's (2017) contention that utilising reflection as a data collection technique in action research enables practitioners to gather data about actual student behaviour, rather than solely relying on students to self-assess their own skills.

8.5.1 Core Disposition: Develop a Commitment to Criticality

Similar to cycles one and two, students showed an interest in critical thinking and a desire to develop their personal critical thinking skills during cycle three. During classes there was significant engagement from students with the tasks and activities they were set. Both Anna and I noticed in our classes that students were less likely to disengage during activities or discussions than they had been in previous cycles and as a result practiced their criticality skills regularly throughout the module. When asked what was successful about the module, students often cited the active methodologies, group work and discussions that they engaged in and one student summed this up as the “*discussion culture*” which was created in the class. The development of a commitment to criticality is an ongoing process that was supported by students' continued engagement in classes and openness to developing the skills and dispositions necessary for critical global learning.

At the end of the module assessments showed evidence of students' commitment to challenging their perceptions and an openness to learning more about the world and continuing to question stereotypes. The images below (Figure 15) are screen shots of assignments that show evidence of how students' thinking evolved during the module.

WHAT IS RACISM?

- ▶ Racism is the belief that one person's race is superior than another race . It is discrimination against the other person for different reasons like skin tone, cultural background and there is an imbalance of power. My definition of racism has change over the course , at the start I just presumed it was about people with a different skin tones thinking they are better than people with a certain skin tone . I now know how ignorant I was without realise the effects it has on everyone else. That it is systemic and started back a long time ago in historical times during the colonisation of countries. I never heard of the word systemic before I now know it means it is related to the system as a whole. I never experienced racism directly towards myself in my life, so it made me realise what it must feel like for people who experience it daily . One example from class we discussed was the travelling community living in Ireland and how they are treated differently because of their cultural background . There is no mention of this ethnic group in the primary school curriculum(NCCA,2019) at all which I was shocked at .

- Through leaning in this module I discovered the difference between simply donating money to people who are struggling and attempting to fix the root causes of their difficulty. The mentality in the north is normally that the south relies on us and is helpless(Bracken & Bryan 2011). This highlights the need for a new awareness that global improvement can't simply come from donations and that giving money to the south without working to improve the conditions which they have to struggle with wont cause any improvement. justice campaigns are very important to improve overall conditions and to move to a situation when charity isn't necessary for the third world



Charity

After being introduced to charity in this module, I have recognised that there is a lot more to charity than meets the eye. I had always associated charity with giving and how it had a positive impact on the person. While it does have a direct benefit for the person, it does not attempt to resolve the problem. I had never thought about this before. Charity fixes the problem for a short period of time and never meets the root of the issue. We have a duty as teachers to guide children in developing a 'lens of social justice' (Simpson 2016, p.92). We need to promote the understanding of charity as positive but looking at the bigger picture, it does not have a powerful, full-scale effect.

Figure 15: Sample Assessments from Cycle Three

Significantly each assessment example highlights the personal learning journeys that students undertook during their engagement with GE. The progress that students made during the module highlights their commitment to challenging their perceptions and ideas and progressing their learning. In comparison to previous cycles, students included an increased level of self-reflection in their assessments in cycle three. The majority of students were able to track how their thinking had evolved over the module, which was not as common in similar assignments during cycle two.

However, for each student there were different aspects of the module that were more or less challenging depending on their prior knowledge or personal circumstances and backgrounds. As a result, I became increasingly aware of the different rates that students were developing their critical thinking skills due to the broad range of levels of readiness for, and openness to criticality that students were demonstrating. This presented a challenging consideration for me as I became more aware of the range of external factors influencing students' learning. The factors which students identified as impacting on their engagement with critical thinking included the nature of their secondary school education, family, cultural and social backgrounds, and their life experiences. Additionally, many

students indicated that the process of developing their critical thinking was gradual and that it took time for them to process and learn the skills.

8.5.1.1 Consideration: The impact of external factors on students' critical thinking

Throughout the data students from both groups cited the nature of their secondary school education as a barrier to their development of critical thinking skills when they came to higher education. Multiple students used the phrase *'spoon-fed'* to describe their experiences of learning in secondary school where they engaged in rote learning and were not encouraged to question or critique the information they were exposed to. The orientation of secondary school education towards high stakes testing impacted on students' interpretation of the purpose of education. This is summed up by one student who stated that *"you're not learning for the sake of learning, you're learning for the sake of points to get into college, to get a job"* (C3GDFG1).

As a result, students described feeling shocked and intimidated when they entered higher education and were suddenly asked to think critically and give their considered opinions on topics. Describing the transition, one student stated that *"I know when I first went to university, when I left secondary school, I hadn't a clue about how to be able to think critically"* (C3GDFG1). This feeling was mirrored by other students who described having to adapt to *"a totally different mindset"* and being shocked at having to adjust to a new way to think and learn. It was helpful to me to reflect on the transition that students were going through in their learning styles and to be mindful of this when considering my expectations for them.

In addition to the impact that their secondary school education had on students' criticality in higher education, it emerged that their individual backgrounds also impacted on their preparedness for developing their critical thinking skills. Often in focus groups or surveys, students mentioned the influence that their parents and their upbringing had on their likelihood to think critically in their everyday lives outside of global education. Some students shared regret that their upbringing had not taught them to think critically, meaning that it was challenging for them when they arrived in higher education. In expressing this frustration, one student indicated that college would be easier for them if they were already critical thinkers as *"if you're exposed to it when you're younger you'll just naturally do it"*

(C3GEFG1). Whereas others shared their gratitude that they arrived in college pre-disposed to critical thinking as a result of their upbringing. This is exemplified in one student's statement: *"I think before college I was a critical thinker because that's how my parents would be, like, they'd always teach me to not believe everything straight away"* (C3GEFG1).

In addition to their family backgrounds, students talked about the societal influences on their lives and the impact these had on their disposition towards critical thinking. During focus group interviews there was a lot of discussion around why some in the group found it easier than others to engage in critical thinking. When considering this one student offered that it depended on *"what they're exposed to, if they come from a very conservative background or if they move or are more exposed to more liberal viewpoints maybe without questioning what they were told"* (C3GEFG1).

One of the groups involved in data collection included mature students and students who had come to the B.Ed programme after completing part or all of another course first. Very often, these students talked about the impact of having life experience on their readiness to embrace critical thinking. This viewpoint was reiterated throughout all three cycles of data collection by students who felt that their age and additional life experiences beyond education supported them in becoming critical thinkers. This is exemplified by one student who stated that *"I think it's only that years have gone on. I'm more mature now through my own experience, that I developed the ability to be more of a critical thinker"* (C3GDFG1).

The diverse influences that students shared with me gave me an insight into the mixed levels of readiness for critical thinking students arrived with to GE lectures. This is a critical consideration which impacted on my planning for sessions and reflection on my expectations for students. I utilised the lesson elements which focused on honouring all voices and collective responsibility from the *Planning Tool* to support me in responding to this diversity. These lesson elements focus on providing opportunities for small group and whole class work respectively. Small group work was usually very structured which involved discussion methodologies such as round robin, silent debates, dice discussion, completing ranking activities, or using the deBono *Thinking Hats* as a framework to discuss a topic from multiple angles. The jigsaw approach, a co-operative learning task, also provided opportunities for all students to contribute meaningfully to group discussions

by assigning members as experts in different areas and allowing time for them to move around the room engaging with new learning before returning to their original group to report back. The jigsaw approach is highly motivating for students because of the task-reward balance. When learners undertake co-operative work, they are motivated to “support and show interest in one another’s work” (Good and Brophy, 2008, p.193). These activities gave students a structure to draw on to build their criticality regardless of their starting point. Additionally, it supported all students to contribute irrespective of their comfort level or prior experiences of criticality.

Whole class work focused on collective responsibility which allowed me to scaffold students’ learning. Some of the methodologies I utilised for this lesson element included voting sticks, contributing to polls or word-clouds on Mentimeter, and individual whiteboards. Additional methods which allowed students to share their perspectives with the whole group included walking debates, co-creating timelines, or contributing to other shared whole-class representations of learning such as Padlet. This lesson element also included open whole-class discussions at times. These activities supported me in scaffolding students’ learning in response to the variety of levels of criticality in the room. By summarising large volumes of responses, highlighting emerging patterns, offering explanations or alternative perspectives and directing conversations in line with GE values I was able to model the skills I wanted students to develop. Ultimately, it was necessary at times to adjust my expectations for students and be cognisant of their diverse starting points in relation to critical thinking. What might be a significant change for one student might have been the starting point for another student.

8.5.1.2 Conceptualising the Development of Critical Thinking as a Gradual Process

As the module progressed my awareness grew of the external factors beyond my control which were influencing students’ readiness to adopt critical thinking skills. I began to conceptualise the development of critical thinking as a gradual process that students progress through at different rates. This was influenced by conversations with students during classes and focus groups. Students told me about their journeys from entering college and first being asked to think critically to where they were now, a year and a half later. One student described the experience as follows: “*everyone was talking about critical thinking and it’s so important but we never knew what it was or like ... we never*

came across it before, but it's kind of like we're developing it now, we're developing the skill” (C3GDFG2). This was mirrored in other conversations at the end of the module where students shared that they were starting to find it easier to think critically now that they had the opportunity to practice the skills in class.

Conceptualising the process of becoming a critical thinker as gradual was also an important consideration when planning questions and activities for students to engage with during lessons. Students told me that they were often intimidated when asked to ‘think critically’ about a topic they found challenging and indicated that they needed lecturers to be considerate of this in their approaches:

Student 4: Just to kind of get us into it a bit before ...

Student 3: Or just take the approach that like nobody knows instead of being like ‘Oh everybody here knows exactly what they're doing’.

(C3GEFG1)

These insights support me to be considerate in the approach I take in the classroom. While I aim to challenge students to push themselves out of their comfort zones, their reflections taught me that sometimes this needs to be done slowly. Using the *Planning Tool* during cycle three enabled me to plan for continual and gradually more complex engagement with criticality throughout the module by continually focusing on the lesson elements in each session, and by using progressively more challenging tasks. For example, as the module progressed, I included less scaffolding and modelling and allowed students more freedom within tasks. The first time I used the jigsaw approach to implement the lesson element aimed at honouring all voices I included very structured prompt questions and carefully chosen content for review. However, as we used the activity more often students began to generate and include content using their own research and knowledge bases while drawing on questions prompted by the displays in the classroom. This supported students to become comfortable with engaging in criticality and built their confidence over time.

8.5.2 Skill One: Develop and use a knowledge base

The approach taken to sharing content knowledge with students was intentionally challenging during cycle three. There was a lot of evidence of the success of this approach in supporting students not only to retain information but to understand the fluid and contested nature of knowledge, to begin to make connections within their knowledge base and to consider bigger picture structural and power considerations in relation to topics. When asked within the MSCSs template to identify what led to change, and increased criticality for them, many students cited their increased knowledge-base. For example, students named “*being informed/educated in the module*”, “*the content from lectures*”, and “*my awareness on the topic*” (C3GDMSCSs) as catalysts for changes to their levels of criticality.

I utilised the lesson element focused on challenging content from the *Planning Tool* to support students in developing this skill. I used both direct and indirect teaching approaches in incorporating this lesson element. Where there was a need to share large volumes of new information with students, I engaged in direct teaching using a PowerPoint or other prompts, or shared videos or pieces of text with students to engage with. I found that this approach was necessary when teaching students about topics such as structural inequality and covering topics like trade, aid, and debt as students often either had very little prior knowledge on these topics or the information they had was often incorrect. Other approaches rely on students coming to the space with relevant prior knowledge to build on and challenge while engaging with content. When this was possible, students were given opportunities to engage with new learning to expand and challenge their own ideas using prompts or other materials during activities like a quiz, a gallery walk, engaging in a simulation game (such as *The Biscuit Game*, *The Trade Game*, or *If the World were a Village of 100 People*), or completing a timeline using prompts and information provided to them. These approaches were used when teaching topics such as migration, sustainability, gender, or racism as students often have some relevant prior knowledge on these topics which could be challenged and built upon.

When asked what was successful about the module during the end of semester review survey, a large proportion of students mentioned being shocked by the content that was shared and indicated that this helped them to better remember and use the information.

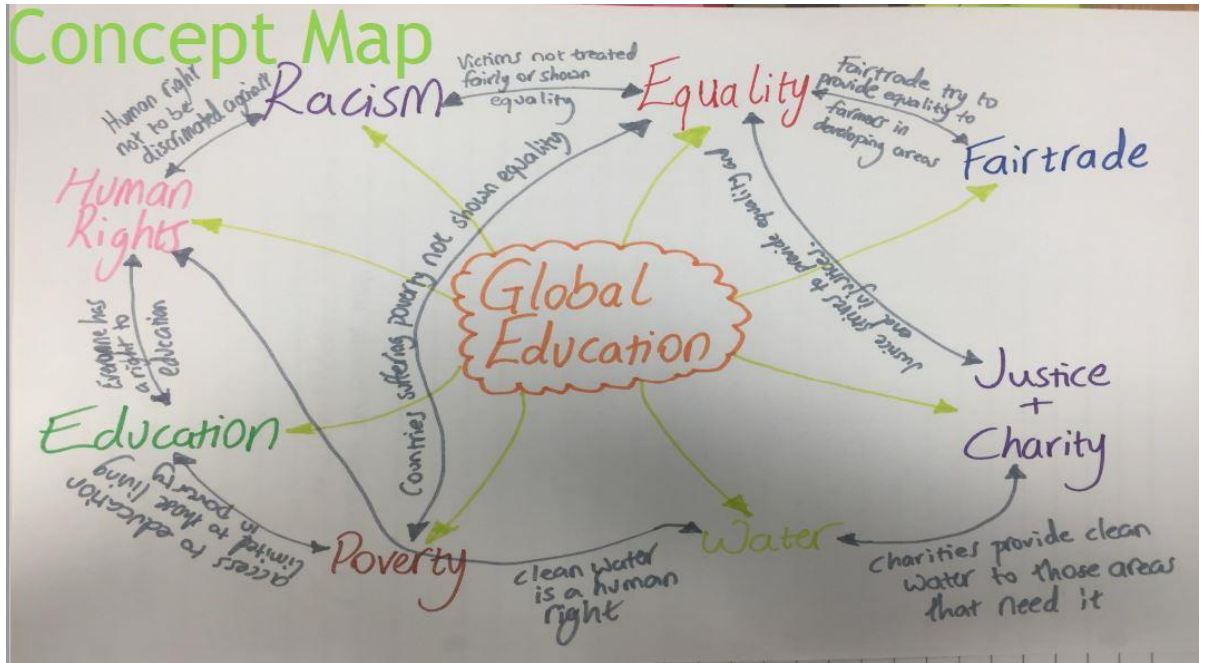
This also arose repeatedly in focus groups where students discussed the importance of comparing their prior ideas to information being shared, and how this supported them to challenge their own misconceptions about topics. One student shared the impact that this approach had in altering the way that they talk about others: *“because we just have our stereotypes about those particular areas, whereas now that made us think like actually we're wrong about what it's like to be in that kind of situation and not to make these generalised statements”* (C3GDFG2). Furthermore, there was a strong indication that students were making a connection between the need to develop a knowledge base to inform their critical thinking. When asked why they didn't consider themselves to be a critical thinker, one student said that *“I just don't know enough about everything to be critical enough”* (C3GDFG3), indicating the importance they placed on knowledge to support their criticality.

To ensure that students become aware of the complexity of GE topics, an integral aspect of the *Planning Tool* was that students were exposed to a variety of perspectives on each topic. This was achieved through my commitment to consistently and purposefully share diverse viewpoints, and through students hearing a variety of perspectives from their classmates throughout each session. I focused on honouring all voices as part of the group work lesson element in the *Planning Tool*. Methodologies used included walking debates, the jigsaw approach, ranking activities, dice discussions, and other discussion activities where students were asked in groups to respond to images, quotes or videos. Consistently, when students were asked in the end of semester surveys what worked well about the methodologies that were used, they talked about the opportunities to hear different perspectives. Students valued being able to learn from their classmates and being given the opportunity to adapt and change their own perspectives as a result. This is demonstrated in this student's response *“the walking debate made me realise some other point of view”* (C3GESurvey). Other students acknowledged that the opportunity to hear and build on differing perspectives helped them to progress their learning, as can be seen by the following statement: *“so it is testing and you're seeing people's different opinions and building on that, it's kind of eye opening”* (C3GDFG1).

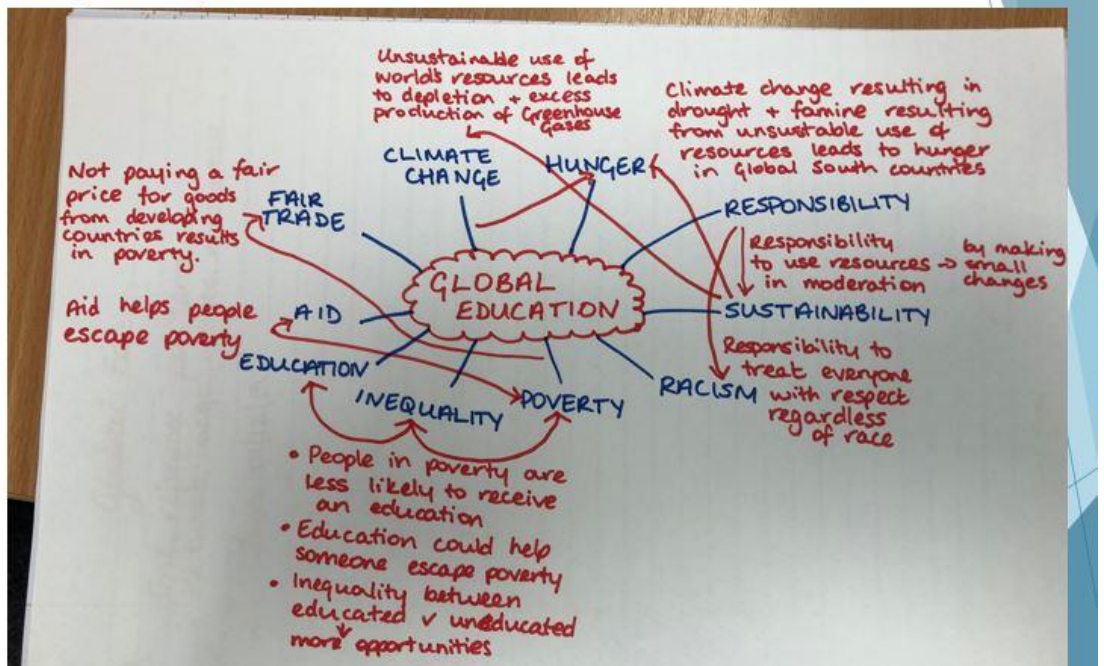
Not only did the approach to sharing and exploring content help students to retain information and to value differing perspectives on topics, it also supported them to connect

their learning between and within topics. During a focus group, one student described taking a train journey where they were planning to get lots of college work done. They started by going over their GE notes, and then found themselves applying what they had learned to other subjects. The student stated that “*once you start thinking about things you can’t stop thinking about it in different contexts beyond the class*” (C3GEFG2). Students were also asked to create concept maps as part of their assessment where they identified the connections between different topics we had covered on the course. While there was a range in the extent to which students found this challenging and as a result also the depth of criticality students exhibited, all students demonstrated the ability to identify key connections. Some examples of these maps can be seen in Figure 16. They highlight the range of approaches taken by students at different stages in their levels of understanding of topics.





Concept Map



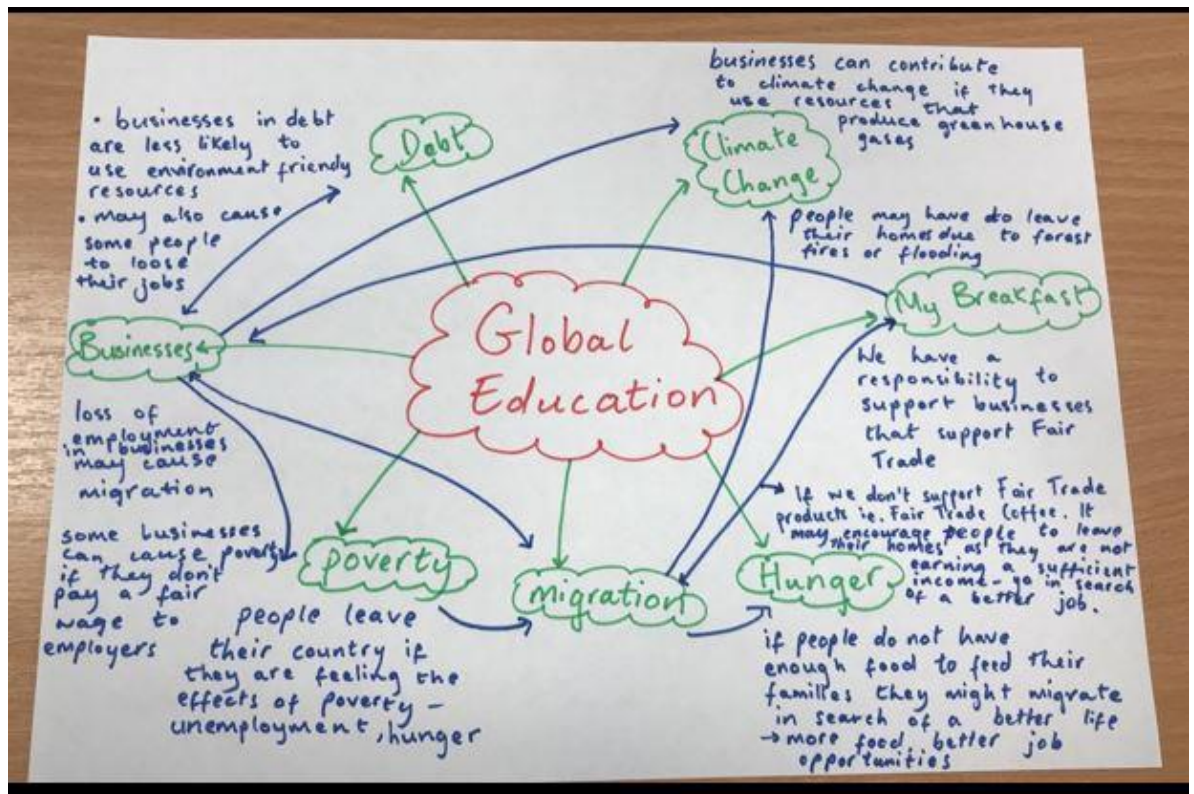


Figure 16: Sample Concept Maps from Cycle Three

Another sub-skill within developing and using a knowledge base is the awareness and understanding of power relationships and structural systems at play within international development contexts. In surveys and focus groups students talked about having their preconceptions about the world challenged. In particular, students often talked about the impact of charity campaigns on their perceptions of poverty. This was highlighted by one student who shared that “you grow up and you only hear about the Trócaire Box⁴, so that’s all you know about Africa. It completely spins your whole perception. You wouldn’t think anything except ‘Oh they’re poor’” (C3GEFG1). There was evidence of a shift in students’ understanding of the causes of poverty, as they began to locate causes in structures and systems of power rather than individuals or communities. Significantly, students also showed evidence of understanding their own role and the role of Ireland in causing and

⁴ Trócaire are an Irish Catholic charity and each year run a fundraising campaign during lent where boxes are sent to schools and parishes across the country for donations. The Trócaire Box includes images of children living in poverty.

perpetuating structures which cause inequality. Showcasing this shift in awareness, one student stated that “*on global issues, very often we are on the bad side, and you have to be open minded about that, you can't ... like it's totally possible to walk through life and not see that at all. You have to be open and critical to see your own faults too and your country's historic faults*” (C3GEFG2). While these outcomes were evident for some students in cycles one and two, Anna and I observed them to be much more widespread throughout the groups in cycle three. The use of the lesson elements within the *Planning Tool* in the ways I have described made acquisition of the skill more accessible for a wider group of students.

8.5.2.1 *Skill One Challenge: Lecturers' knowledge base impacts on the teaching students receive*

While I found the implementation of the *Planning Tool* in cycle three successful in supporting students to develop and use an expanded knowledge base, there was an inherent challenge for me. The approach taken to content knowledge within the *Planning Tool* focuses on ensuring students are provided with multiple perspectives on topics, and opportunities to confront their own preconceptions in light of challenging content presented to them. As an integral part of teaching in this way, it was necessary for me to have significant knowledge in each of the topics we were exploring and to be comfortable discussing issues from multiple perspectives. While this was easily achievable in relation to many topics, I found preparing for other topics more challenging. When teaching the module previously, I approached topics in a number of different ways. On topics where I felt less knowledgeable, I prepared heavily and focused on presenting information in a passive manner rather than providing opportunities for interaction with the content. This more scripted approach was not in line with the principles of the *Planning Tool* and at times I struggled to improve my comfort level in a topic before entering the classroom.

This challenge was particularly prevalent when preparing to teach a session about structural inequality. This session focused on the underlying causes of inequality and in particular explores unfair trade rules, tax injustice, illegitimate debt, and complexities associated with international aid. Prior to cycle three, I had very rarely taught this session for a variety of reasons, though I had observed Anna teaching it and helped to plan it

multiple times. The following extract from a reflection in October 2019 highlights the challenges I was having:

I have struggled with writing and preparing for this session more than any other session I have written. I think I have spent at least eight hours in the preparation stage and had countless conversations with Anna about it. I have felt so uncomfortable and really lacked confidence in my ability to teach it. I also struggled quite a lot to link the session to the structure of the planning tool.

I want to use the jigsaw approach; it has worked really well with other topics and gives students an opportunity to teach each other. But no matter how hard I tried to write materials for students to use in small groups, I couldn't. I have been quite upset and have had a knot in my stomach for a long time trying to figure out how to approach the session while still staying true to the values I feel are fundamental to the planning tool.

Ultimately, I am too uncomfortable preparing materials for students to use, it's too hard to simplify the issues enough to fit on one page and I'm not confident in their ability to teach material that can be very new and very controversial or challenging to our own perceptions of the world right after learning about it. I am worried that they would misinterpret the information and then other students learning would be compromised as a result.

Also, I feel really uncomfortable in teaching the topic. Although I know a good bit about it, I haven't taught it much before, Anna has always taken those sessions for different reasons I have not been available. I feel that other topics we cover (migration, climate change, gender, racism) are not new concepts to students and are well documented in the media whereas this session I knew would be more challenging and therefore more difficult for students to understand and connect with if not delivered in the right way.

From my reflection it is clear that I was predominantly struggling with how to approach the topic with students in a way that would be interactive, yet still allow me to retain ownership of delivering content that I felt was quite complex and would be challenging for students. Feeling unsure how to proceed, I disregarded all the preparation I had done and asked Anna to lead the session in her usual way.

In the end, I asked Anna to teach the session her way (this is an area of particular interest for her and she has an established approach she uses) and I sat in yesterday on her sessions. I observed Anna teaching the topics as a narrative, she told stories, gave examples and asked students repeatedly to imagine themselves in different scenarios that would help them to engage with the topic. There were many questions throughout the session, students were asked to work as a group briefly at the beginning and repeatedly asked to feedback answers and ideas both

individually and from their groups and at the end they were asked for their reactions allowing them to connect and acknowledge their personal reactions.

Although her session didn't look like others which followed the *Planning Tool* in that it didn't have multiple activities for students to engage in, it still included all four lesson elements. Students were asked to engage in personal reflections throughout, given opportunities at the beginning and end to work as a group and were also asked to provide answers to the whole group, just not as frequently as in other sessions. The difference was that the lesson element concerned with teaching challenging content had a much greater and traditional focus than others. This was a good example of the flexibility of the *Planning Tool*. Additionally, Anna's style of presentation and approach mirrored the values inherent in the *Planning Tool* even if the activities were weighted differently than we thought they would be.

The above reflection represents a turning point for me in how I conceptualised my approach to content delivery. Observing Anna, an experienced and skilled educator, facilitate a content heavy session in a way that remained engaging and challenging for students helped me to re-envision how I approached my own teaching. The following day, I taught the sessions to my own student groups, and felt happy with how they turned out, as can be seen from my reflection:

Today I taught the session twice. I felt much more comfortable after watching Anna do it yesterday and talking with her about it afterwards. I felt the sessions went incredibly well. Students engaged very well, answered questions and gave me their attention throughout.

As the module progressed, I was able to take my learning from the structural inequality session into my planning and delivery for other topics. The key change for me was in recognising the multitude of ways that content could be shared with students while still remaining challenging, capturing their attention and encouraging engagement. Much later in the semester, I reflected on how my approach to content had evolved:

As I have evolved to focus more explicitly on knowledge over time through naming it in the planning tool and the conceptual framework – I have reduced the quantity of knowledge I include in each session – but increased my confidence in owning and knowing the information and not being apologetic for it.

This reflection reveals the ongoing internal battle I engaged with in terms of my confidence around my own knowledge base. While working through three cycles of action research has significantly improved and changed my approach to teaching content, it is an ongoing journey that I will continue to observe within myself and reflect on with colleagues.

8.5.3 Skill Two: Learn to Question Orthodoxies

The use of the *Planning Tool* supported me in ensuring that I was conscious of modelling myself identifying and challenging orthodoxies in relation to the topics I was covering with students. Firstly, approaching content from a perspective of challenging students' preconceptions supported this, and then consistently providing opportunities for students to practice their criticality individually, in small groups, and then at a whole class level through the lesson elements ensured that this skill retained a continual focus throughout the module. The success of this approach was evident in survey responses where 90% of students reported that they were more likely to question things they hear as a result of the module, while 78% of students identified increased questioning skills as their most significant change they experienced in the module. This represents a slight increase from previous cycles.

Across the data students spoke about the value they placed on having opportunities to compare their prior beliefs about the world to the new and challenging content I was presenting them with. During many sessions students first had the opportunity to consider their preconceptions and record them through ranking activities, worksheets, digital surveys or visual voting cues. Subsequently, they would engage with new content and then have the opportunity to revisit and consider their original thoughts in light of what they had just learned. In this way, students were supported to identify the common orthodoxies or "status quo stories" (Keating, 2007) that they held. This is reflected in responses gathered through the end of semester review when students were asked what went well in the module. One student stated that "*I really enjoyed it because we were allowed to form our own ratios before we were told any facts*" (C3GESurvey). Similarly, another student shared that they valued opportunities "*where we stated our thoughts on a topic first then told truth and shocked by stats/statements*" (C3GESurvey). Comments similar to these were found throughout the data, and many students indicated that they appreciated this

approach as it allowed them to challenge their own thinking. For example, this student appreciated that “*as you heard other ideas, you were allowed to change your opinion*” (C3GDSurvey). The process of identifying personal ideas and beliefs and then challenging them through comparison with new information not only supported students to identify orthodoxies but gave students a sense of ownership over their personal learning journeys as exemplified in this quote from a focus group interview:

I do find it good that rather than you just giving us all the information, like the reason why we remembered the statistics was because we had our own ideas and then they're being challenged and like that, rather than just being spoon fed all the information. Like you're not going to remember that as well, whereas when you have an idea in your head and you're then like oh, and to challenge them. Like I'm actually going to take this information on board much better.
(C3GDFG1)

A crucial factor in supporting students to continue to challenge orthodoxies is to ensure they have opportunities to practise the skill and build up their confidence and abilities while in class. I found that the combination of individual, small group, and whole class work supported students to develop and maintain this skill throughout the module. In each session students were asked to engage with questioning, challenging, and discussing the topic being shared through a variety of methodologies. For students who were not normally inclined to contribute to whole-class discussions, they appreciated the opportunity to practice their questioning skills within the safety of their small groups. Commenting on this during a focus group, one student noted that “*when you're in more confined groups and you're given a focus to talk about, people are more comfortable talking about it*” (C3GDFG4). Students often commented in focus groups and surveys on the benefit of working in small groups to give them the opportunity to consider multiple perspectives and challenge their own ideas. During a focus group one student described the experience as follows:

Even giving the opportunities to think-pair-share or do anything in your groups. Or to put your opinions down on the whiteboards or on the sticky notes. Everyone at that table is going to come at it from a slightly different angle so I suppose that gives you the opportunity to take on other people's opinions and evaluate yourself, whether you agree with that or ...
(C3GDFG3)

Furthermore, the provision of space to discuss and question ideas in small groups before asking for responses at a whole-class level supported students to build their confidence in a skill that was new to many of them. This experience was discussed during different focus groups, and is captured in the following statement: *“in your group you've the opportunity to see the reaction of other people to what you've said from the other people in your group so you can see off your friends and if it was welcomed you might have more confidence to say it”* (C3GDFG2). The continued focus on small group activities was a new approach in cycle three. Anna and I reflected multiple times on the impact of this. We felt that opportunities to engage in smaller groups increased students' confidence, got them practicing their questioning skills more, and led them to find questioning orthodoxies easier than students had in previous cycles.

Supporting students to question orthodoxies also included a focus on learning to envision new stories that run counter to the orthodoxies they identified. This is an important aspect of questioning orthodoxies that supports students to consider how to make positive changes in the world. Students were given opportunities to consider new stories in a number of different ways throughout the module. Often students were simply asked to share their reactions to what they had learned and in doing so identify how things could be different. The following examples (Figure 17) are contributions students made on whiteboards after discussions in their small groups about the language we use to categorise and label countries and regions of the world.

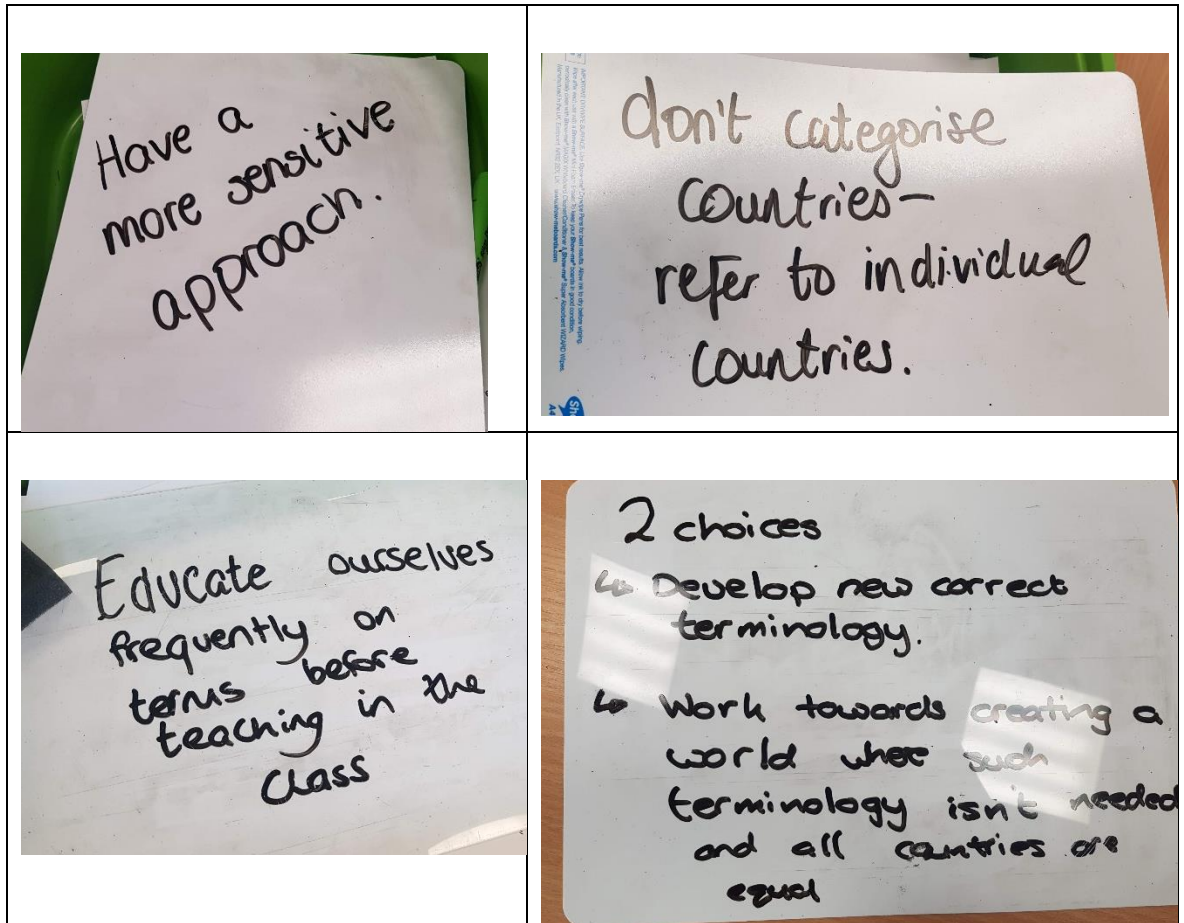


Figure 17: Examples of Students Exploring Different ways to Label or Categorise Countries and Regions of the World

During another session students were asked to critique a variety of actions that people engage in to respond to issues of injustice. By questioning and challenging popular actions students were supported not only to develop their questioning skills but to envisage alternative approaches. The examples in Figure 18 show students' responses to critiquing popular actions which often take place in primary schools, such as fundraising or shoebox appeals. The examples also include advice that students concluded should be given to others when considering engaging in action.

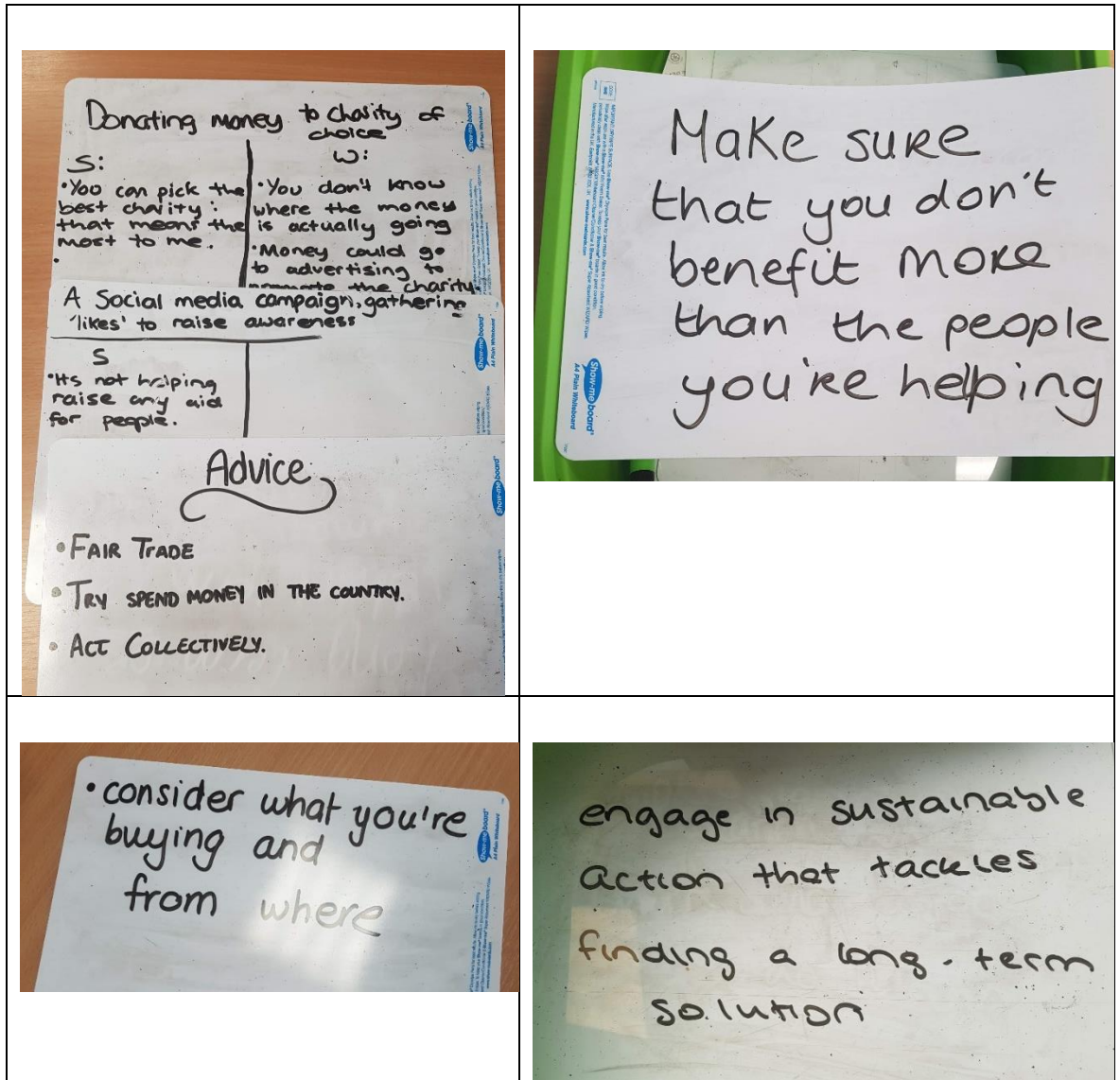


Figure 18: Examples of Students Critiquing Popular Actions

While responses don't always offer actionable solutions, students' contributions consistently demonstrated a commitment to imagining alternative approaches. For some students simply questioning and challenging actions that they were previously proud of was a significant step, others were more open to imagining alternatives.

8.5.3.1 *Skill Two Challenge: Finding the right pace to appropriately and effectively support students to develop their questioning skills*

The majority of students were very receptive to the teaching approach taken in cycle three, and there was significant evidence of students learning to question orthodoxies when

prompted and also independently. However, I became aware of the need to be conscious of the pace at which I asked students to progress the development of their skills. As outlined earlier, students' individual backgrounds impacted on their receptiveness to developing their critical thinking. Consequently, some students needed more support and to be facilitated to progress more slowly than others when developing skills such as questioning orthodoxies which challenged elements of their identities and lives. The following excerpt from a conversation during a focus group interview at the end of the module highlights that although they enjoyed it, students also found the module overwhelming at times:

Student 2: I think there was a lot of critical thinking. Just generally a lot of thinking going on.

All Students: Laughing.

Brigid: Too much?

Student 2: And it's mind blowing ... no, it's good but it's sometimes a lot.

Student 3: That's why I've to eat before I go in!

(C3GEFG1)

During a separate focus group interview, students discussed their openness to and desire to develop their criticality but highlighted that often they needed support to progress towards the more challenging aspects of it. The following excerpt is from a focus group which took place early in the module where the students are discussing a different module to explain the approach they would like to see happen in GE:

Student 9: Lecturers should include prompt questions or videos because I know a lot of the time they're just like critically think about this or analyse this and we're like 'Where do you come from'? or 'Where do you start'?

Brigid: So like modelling or ...

Student 9: Yeah, like we just came in on day 1, and they're like 'critically think, just do it'.

Student 4: It was like critically think about Aristotle and like...

All Students: Laughing.

Student 4: I can't even critically think about my dinner, never mind Aristotle!

Brigid: So, start small?

Student 3: Yeah, they start, and they just start up here and you're like 'no we need to start way down here' like. No Aristotle.

(C3GEFG1)

Following this focus group, I also had a number of informal conversations with other students who shared that the process of questioning commonly accepted perceptions of the world was challenging for them. I tried to address this throughout the module by modelling myself questioning orthodoxies that emerged and providing structured prompts to support students' individual and group work. Although this led to increased engagement with questioning and students feeling more confident in their skills, this skill remained challenging for students. As outlined previously, the broader context of students' lives continues to impact on their learning in the classroom. Students shared that it was often difficult to use their questioning skills outside the classroom: *"I feel like a lot of times older people would say something and depending on the situation you're in you either just have to accept it and then if we do try to challenge it they're kind of like 'You shouldn't be speaking to me like that, you should have respect'"*(C3GDFG2). Some students felt able to continue practicing their questioning skills beyond the classroom, but others admitted they sometimes felt they needed to take an easier route:

Student 1: No sometimes it's easier just ... like if someone tells you the sky is blue, you're like 'Yeah, okay'.

Brigid: Yeah, easier to accept?

Student 2: Easier to not challenge it anymore because sometimes you doubt yourself then. You don't know if you're right or wrong.

(C3GDFG2)

The process of learning to question orthodoxies is challenging for students and although the approaches adopted in the module supported them to develop their skills, students continue to be impacted by their lives outside the classroom.

8.5.4 Skill Three: Engage in Self-Reflection

When planning sessions Anna and I ensured there were opportunities in every session for students to reflect on the topics being explored, apply their learning to their own lives and consider information in the context of their belief systems. The lesson element concerned with personalising issues in the *Planning Tool* supported development of this skill. Due to the personal nature of reflection, teaching methodologies often allowed students to reflect individually by engaging with methodologies such as exit slips where students were asked to respond to prompts or questions and share their reaction to the session, or by participating in guided visualisations or reflections and then writing personal responses. These activities allowed students to reflect independently and anonymously with the aim of enabling students to reflect on a deeper level and encourage greater honesty in their responses. However, there is also value in supporting students to realise that their perspectives and experiences are often not isolated, but shared by their peers. This supports the re-centering of justice as a structural and collective issue rather than isolated or personal experiences. Therefore, incorporating this lesson element involved implementing teaching methodologies which facilitated students to consider their perspectives in the context of those of the overall group, but in a psychologically safe way. Activities which facilitate this included voting or sharing opinions on materials covered using either physical voting sticks from the table packs or digital tools such as Mentimeter with results shared on the interactive whiteboard, or by using individual whiteboards to record and display reactions or responses. When using these approaches, I would often read out or comment on the patterns I saw in the room, encouraging students to reflect further on that aspect before facilitating a broader discussion with the wider group.

Analysis of the data indicated that students appreciated these opportunities for reflection during classes and were improving their self-reflection skills as a result. Within MSCSs, 76% of students reported that the most significant change they had experienced as a result of the module was that they were now more aware of their own opinions and values. Furthermore, a common theme which emerged from the data indicated that opportunities to reflect made students feel like their voices and individual perspectives were authentically valued in the classroom. The following excerpt from a focus group interview highlights the importance of ensuring students feel that their perspectives are valued in the classroom:

Student 3: To know that it's a safe environment where you can have your own opinion and not that you're going to be judged.

Brigid: And how do you know it's a safe environment?

Student 3: Because the lecturers are willing to hear what you say.

(C3GDFG2)

While all students were encouraged to contribute during classes, and I implemented a number of strategies to facilitate this, we followed the ground rules for Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry (Andreotti et al., no date) in both valuing all contributions but also questioning them. I regularly questioned students' contributions and challenged them to think about issues in different ways. This approach deepened their self-reflection, and from my observations, did not hamper engagement as students continued to contribute diverse views.

In supporting students to engage in self-reflection, it was crucial to ensure that they had the opportunity to develop their awareness and understanding of their personal perceptions of the world around them. In surveys many students highlighted the importance of the reflection activities used at the beginning of classes to support them in considering their own perspectives prior to engaging with new content. One student explained that *“reflecting at the start of sessions gave me the chance to gather my own thoughts and opinions on the subject before it was discussed”* (C3GDSurvey). While some students indicated that they did not *‘see the point’* of the reflections, the majority of students expressed appreciation for them and cited their importance in providing time and space for students to build their awareness of their own thoughts and viewpoints on topics. Not only did reflections support students to reflect but students also highlighted the benefit of walking debates and ranking activities in supporting them to become more aware of their own thinking on topics. In surveys these two methodologies were mentioned repeatedly by students in relation to their critical thinking development. The following two examples from end of semester surveys show how these methodologies supported students to engage in self-reflection:

The walking debate required quick decision making. It helped me to quickly rationalise why and what I thought of problems.

Ranking activities ... getting to see your response in comparison to others in the class.
(C3GESurveys)

These examples show the importance of supporting students to get to know their own minds better. Many students highlighted the links they saw between being a critical thinker and having a greater awareness of personal perceptions. This is highlighted in the following quotes from focus groups where one student indicated that *“you have to know yourself in order to make big decisions”* (C3GDFG1), and another described their own engagement with critical thinking as follows: *“it's kind of like to make sure I have my own ... like I like to know about things and have my opinion about things and be able to be knowledgeable about different things, and I guess that means being critical and having your own opinion”* (C3GDFG3).

Not only does critical thinking require learners to come to know their own minds better but also involves questioning those personal perceptions. There was a lot of evidence from the data of students challenging their conceptualisations of the world. In surveys students highlighted both the walking debate and the activity *If the World were a Village of 100 People* as key examples of opportunities for them to question their preconceptions. The walking debates supported this questioning because it *“opened my eyes to the topic - let me change my answer”* (C3GDSurvey). Students had similar opportunities during the world a village activity as it *“was really effective at re-evaluating my misconceptions about poverty and wealth”* (C3GESurvey). The approach to delivering content in a challenging way as a result of the *Planning Tool* forced students to continually reflect on what they knew or thought about what was being shared. Re-counting the experience of discussions during classes one student shared that *“someone would say these kind of broad abstract points and you'd have to challenge it and see what you think and then you get to hear what other people think as well”* (C3GDFG2). Ultimately, the commitment to challenging and questioning personal ideas was at the heart of students' development of criticality. During a focus group, students were discussing what it had meant for them to become a critical thinker and concluded that *“if you're a critical thinker you allow for the possibility for yourself being wrong”* (C3GEFG2). While it is not possible to predict the extent to which students will continue to engage in self-reflection beyond the life of the module, the short-term outcomes offer hope that they will continue to practice self-reflection independently.

Indeed, student assessments, as highlighted earlier in this chapter, showcased increased self-reflection from students in cycle three over previous cycles demonstrating their development and retention of this skill throughout the module.

8.5.4.1 Skill Three Challenge: Some students were on a journey towards learning that their ideas and opinions are valid

The evidence of students considering and challenging their personal ideas about the world was encouraging. However, it is important to acknowledge that many students were only beginning to accept that their ideas were valid. During a focus group, students were discussing the experience of learning to critically think when they came to college. In their discussion they acknowledged the journey that they were going through to consider their own perspectives as valid.

Student 1: Like I always find myself trying to do it and then I'm like 'No wait, that's probably wrong'. But realistically you're doing it yourself. It's your own opinion so it can't be wrong.

Student 2: Yeah to emphasise that they're your thoughts so they can't be wrong. Like no one else can tell you that they're wrong.

(C3GEFG1)

For students who are accustomed to succeeding in education through a focus on assessments and always knowing the 'right' answer or 'best' approach they should take, the process of learning to consider and value their own experiences before putting them in context with other perspectives was challenging. This journey that students were on was further highlighted for me by the students who talked about feeling '*judged*' when sharing their ideas during lectures. Many students shared that they were often reluctant to share their ideas during lectures in higher education because they were concerned about getting the answer wrong or incurring negative feedback from classmates or lecturer. One student described the experience of wanting to speak up in class but being apprehensive about the response it would cause:

But I think that other people prefer to be without speaking. I also think that here the students don't speak when the teacher asks for an opinion and I sometimes feel that

I'm a bit, I don't know how to say... if I speak too much when a teacher asks for an opinion it's like the others will be like shut up.
(C3GEFG2)

When exploring how to counteract this feeling for students, it was suggested that “*there needs to be a safe environment for students to have their own opinion and know they won't be judged*” (C3GDFG2). Within my practice, I made a concerted effort to ensure students had frequent opportunities to share their perspectives, and I aimed to always respond in a respectful and encouraging way. The pre-conditions for learning within the *Planning Tool* helped me to do this by ensuring that I was building relationships with students and remaining conscious of the learning environment. However, I did not allow students who presented discriminatory views, or ideas that were not based in fact to go unchallenged. To do this in a respectful way, I focused on critiquing the comments rather than individual students in a depersonalised way.

8.5.5 Skill Four: Use a values-lens when exploring issues of global justice

From the outset of cycle three, through a focus on the pre-conditions for learning in the *Planning Tool*, Anna and I made a concerted effort to ensure that the learning environment was steeped in the values we wanted to promote. As seen in Appendix R, the displays in the classroom included information in relation to human rights, ethical use of images and promoted our approach to questioning and commitment to valuing all voices within the classroom. We promoted values of justice and equity through not only the physical learning environment but the routines and teaching approaches that we adopted. While it is difficult to assess the direct impact of this on students, these approaches supported me to ensure I was consistently mindful of the values I wanted to promote. The wall displays often acted as prompts for me to refer to during conversations with students and the routines established helped to keep me on track and ensure that I continued to focus on living out the values I wanted to promote through my practices. Without the displays and routines in the previous action research cycles, I found it more challenging to consistently remember to focus on living values through my teaching and often forgot key points in my responses to students without having them on the wall as a reminder.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, students had opportunities to consider and engage with multiple perspectives on each of the topics we covered in the module. Furthermore, the

variety of perspectives shared often encouraged students to consider the different values-lenses people use when approaching global justice topics. For example, during the sessions on racism and gender students were asked to engage with edited versions of Peggy McIntosh's *'Invisible Knapsack'*. During this activity students were presented with statements and asked to consider whether they apply to their own lives, and to reflect on how their experiences might compare to others who identify differently to them. During the session on racism, students considered statements such as:

1. *I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my ethnicity widely and positively represented.*
2. *I can book a hotel for a family function without worrying that our reservation will be rejected or cancelled if my ethnicity is revealed.*
3. *I can use my new iPhone in public without worrying someone might question if I stole it, or if I deserve it.*

In the session focused on gender we used statements like:

1. *I can wear makeup, nail varnish and the clothes I like without worrying that I will be bullied.*
2. *I have felt pressure (from media, friends, family or society) to appear tough and not show emotion even when I'm feeling vulnerable.*
3. *When walking home late after a night out, I feel fairly comfortable walking alone.*

The activity is inherently values-laden and promotes an awareness of privilege and encourages consideration of responsibilities. For many students this activity supported them to deepen their awareness of their own lives and apply a values-lens when considering other peoples' experiences. The following excerpt is from a focus group when students were discussing the impact of this activity on their own teaching:

Student 1: That as a teacher you have to be open-minded, and empathetic critical thinkers.

Student 2: The idea of not taking your own privileges for granted, like we didn't see them often, but with this unpacking your own ...

Brighid Knapsack.

Student 2: The knapsack, yeah, like wow! Of course, you don't really think about it but there's so much. If you're a teacher, the chances are you done quite good in school and you might have had a specific path through your life and not everyone had that.

Brighid: Yeah, so it's that awareness of the other ...

Student 3: Yeah, I think you have to be aware that the children don't have the same life.

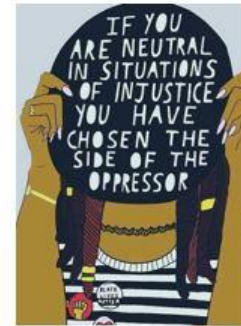
(C3GEFG2)

The session on racism also supported students to deepen their awareness of the way in which members of the Irish Travelling Community are treated. During this session many students were confronted with a contradiction between values of justice and equity and the commonly accepted racism against Travellers. Describing a class discussion about discrimination against Travellers one student shared that “*she didn't consider it to be racism, whereas I did. I thought that was kind of interesting because you and I were like ‘Oh we see it’. And the other two were like ‘I don't really see it’*” (C3GEFG2). The experience of these students was common during the racism sessions and highlights the different values-lenses which students applied to topics in their interpretation of events. During this session, I took a definitive stance against racist perspectives on the topic. However, I continued to encourage students to share their diverging opinions and used this as an opportunity to challenge them in the context of human rights and anti-racism frameworks.

Despite ongoing struggles for many students to fully adopt the values of the module, the majority of student assignments reflected the use of a values-lens when considering the evolution of their understanding of the topics covered in the module. For many students, the values promoted within the module impacted on their engagement with topics and this can be seen in the examples in Figure 19. These examples showcase students engaging with ongoing development of their ideas and incorporating the values of the module in the process.

RACISM

- Racism is any act of marginalized prejudice which abuses power. It is the discrimination of one's ethnicity due to factors such as skin colour, origin, beliefs, political view or cultural traditions. Racist remarks may occur due to one assuming their ethnicity is superior.
- My understanding of Racism has developed through engaging with this module. I understood racism put others at a disadvantage. However, Peggy McIntosh's article about 'White Privilege' opened my eyes to the unacknowledged privileges white people regularly take for granted. McIntosh (1988) considers these as 'an invisible package of unearned assets'. In class we 'unpacked our invisible knapsacks' and developed empathy as we considered some scenarios such as 'Booking a hotel for a family function without fear that releasing your ethnicity could cause the booking to be rejected.' I had not previously considered such statements as privileges, but rather as things I took for granted.
- I was appalled by the high percentages of racism experienced by people in Ireland, particularly in relation to traveler culture with 80% of Irish people unwilling to accept a traveler as a friend (NACD, 2000).



Term 3 global citizenship

- **Understanding/societal impacts** My thinking about global citizenship has changed as I had not reflected very deeply on how my life affects others, apart from avoiding clothes brands that are manufactured in countries that are criticised for poor working conditions. The concept of one planet being shared amongst all the people on earth made me consider daily activities that are commonplace in first world countries that have negative effects on the third world, particularly around unfair trade of coffee, bananas, etc.
- The societal effects of an awareness of the concept global citizenship would be no unfair trade, as people would avoid disadvantaging farmers. A sense of responsibility for improving the lives of others in the third world could cause less discrimination based on ethnicity and racism. Society would become geared towards equal opportunities and rights for everyone, regardless of where they lived, their gender, etc.

Figure 19: Sample Student Assignments in Cycle Three, Focused on Values Development

8.5.5.1 Skill Four Challenge: Students can draw on and apply diverging values-lenses when approaching topics

Throughout the module I repeatedly aimed to increase students' awareness of the world around them and asked them to consider topics from the perspective of others who experience global justice issues in a different way from them due to their circumstances. During the session on migration, which took place online during cycle three due to a scheduling issue, students were asked to contribute to a discussion forum giving their considered responses to some hypothetical applications for asylum. In their responses it is clear that students found some scenarios easier to empathise with than others. Of note for this critical global learning skill were the diverging values that were visible in students' responses. The following is one of the five case studies students were asked to consider:

Diane is a citizen of Magnolia. She has been suffering from a serious disease for the past three months. Her doctor believes that she only has a few months left to live. Her only hope of survival is to receive a new, but very expensive medical treatment. Unfortunately, Diane is very poor. In addition, the Magnolian government has suspended all free healthcare services. All citizens are now required to pay the full price of their medical care. Diane will never be able to afford the treatment that she needs to survive. However, in neighbouring Ruritania, healthcare is still subsidised by the government. If Diane is allowed into Ruritania, she will be guaranteed free healthcare. With the help of a friend, Diane travelled to the Ruritanian border and applied for refugee status. She claims that she will not survive if she remains in Magnolia. Please comment below on whether you think Diane would be granted asylum in Ruritania.

In their responses, the majority of students indicated correctly that Diane would not be granted asylum, which is in line with international laws in relation to migration and asylum. However, the qualifying statements which accompanied their responses revealed a diversity of values-lenses being employed. Many students shared that they felt Diane would be a burden on the Ruritanian state by stating that “*Her medical expenses would be too expensive for the Ruritania government to subsidise*” or “*It is not Ruritania's responsibility to subsidise healthcare for Magnolians*”. While these statements are not incorrect from a legal standpoint, they do reflect commonly cited rhetoric in relation to immigrants being a drain on the economy and mirror arguments often made against asylum seekers in Ireland. In contrast, other students approached the topic from a different values-lens, and although agreeing that it was unlikely that Diane would be granted asylum under law, their responses reflected values inherent in global citizenship such as human rights,

and equity in statements such as *“I believe that Diane should be granted asylum as everyone is entitled to medical care, and this is not being provided to her in her home country. However, I think that she won't be granted asylum as she is not being forced to leave her country due to war or conflict”*. While all the responses show evidence of students adopting a values-lens, there is a notable difference in the values being drawn on. Some students found it easier to empathise with Diane’s situation, while others took a broader perspective and considered only the impact that Diane would have on the country she was trying to enter.

In the situation outlined above, it was challenging to monitor and respond to students as there were in excess of four hundred and thirty students contributing to the online discussion forum. However, during in class activities, it was more manageable to respond on the go and support students to tease out some of the underlying values informing their contributions. This was supported by having a human rights display in the room to draw on. However, it was not always possible to catch or respond to all comments and students continued to draw on differing values to inform their consideration of topics throughout the module.

Although students drew on contrasting values in their learning, during this cycle neither Anna nor I experienced the same level of discriminatory views that we had in cycle two. While this may be a reflection of the students themselves, it could also be linked to the approach taken. I was deliberate in my approach to dissenting or discriminatory views in ensuring that common ones were mentioned in the course of lessons and critiqued. Additionally, the increased opportunities for student engagement allowed students to challenge each other’s thinking regularly.

8.5.6 Consideration for Teaching: Outcomes

It is important that students not only develop the skills of criticality but also consider the ways in which those skills impact on their lives and can be used to have a positive influence in the world. There was a strong indication from students that they felt their development of critical thinking skills would have a significant impact on their professional lives as classroom teachers. Indeed, students often reported within MSCSs that the changes to their criticality that they identified would have the most significance to

them as classroom teachers. This is summarised by one student who stated that *“it will make a difference when I am teaching”* (C3GEMSCS). Throughout focus groups and surveys students consistently made connections between teaching and critical thinking, sharing that they felt it was necessary for educators to be critical thinkers to be able to better support learners, to reflect on and improve their practices, and to be able to teach children about the world. Their motivation for incorporating criticality into their teaching practices was always linked to improved outcomes for the children they would teach.

When discussing the importance of critically engaging children in their learning about the world one student shared that *“it’s important for children to be able to see themselves as a part of something much bigger”* (C3GDFG1). Not only did students want to use critical thinking to improve their own teaching practices, but they also indicated that it would be important for them to pass on their skills. One student described what they felt it would be like to bring critical thinking into the classroom, stating that *“you’re not forcing your own opinion then on other people and especially on children like, because they need to form their own opinion and thinking as well”* (C3GDFG2).

During a focus group discussion students talked about the purpose of education and the important role that educators play in society. The following excerpt from that discussion highlights why these students thought it was imperative that classroom teachers be critical thinkers:

Student 3: Yeah. But we're role models, primary school teachers are role models, so I feel like they really have to know themselves and be able to critically think and stuff.

Brigid: So, you think it's important?

Student 3: Yeah, for primary school teaching because children look up to you.

Student 8: You're influencing young people's minds like, so you're very powerful.

Student 6: Woah!

Student 8: But you know like as in, you have an effect on the future of society like you know?

(C3GEFG1)

While students were exposed to different forms of actions as part of the module and had the opportunity to consider and critique common actions such as fundraising or campaigning, the most significant way they felt they could have an impact on society was through their teaching. The conversation reflected in the quote above highlights students' awareness of the influence that educators can have on society and the potential for critical thinking to positively impact on their ability to make a difference as classroom teachers.

8.5.6.1 Consideration: Critical thinking as conscious versus unconscious, as visible versus silent

A debate that ran through different focus groups related to what critical thinking 'should' look like in action. Many students indicated that they engaged in critical thinking silently in their own minds, but did not often act on it. Sometimes they found it simply easier not to verbally question or disagree with the person they were talking to, especially if it was a family member or an older person. Other students indicated that they were shy, or unsure of the validity of their thinking, and so would often keep their thoughts to themselves. The following student described themselves as a sometimes-critical-thinker, indicating that they were happy to practice it internally, but didn't do so during conversations with people:

I don't know, I think I do it in my own mind. You know when you're listening to the radio and things come up on and you're like 'No I don't agree with that at all'. But I wouldn't say I go around and I critically analyse everyone or anything that anyone says.
(C3GDFG3)

When I asked them if the criticality only happened internally, did that mean they were not a critical thinker, they responded that *"not really, I suppose, because you're still critically thinking. It doesn't have to be said out loud"* (C3GDFG3). In a separate focus group another student asserted that critical thinking necessitated engagement, stating that:

Because like if you're only subconsciously thinking of it, you're not actually registering that you're doing it and then other people don't know that you're doing it. So, if I just like listened to what somebody said and didn't ... let's say I didn't really agree with them or I was like, had a lot of questions and I just sat back and just thought about them in my head and didn't act on them, the person won't know.
(C3GDFG2)

This student equated critical thinking with verbalising their questions or thoughts and emphasised the potential impact of not doing so. The likelihood that students will verbalise their critical thinking during a conversation could depend on their level of comfort in the situation and their level of confidence in their thoughts and the potential impact of their contribution. If students continue to predominantly contain their critical thinking skills to their internal thoughts the impact that their critical thinking skills can have on society will be limited. Furthermore, without sharing these thoughts students would miss out on dialogic opportunities to test their thinking and I would be unable to assess their learning. It is an important consideration for educators to be mindful of the factors which limit students sharing their critical thinking with others by encouraging them and providing opportunities for students to become comfortable and familiar with voicing their critical thinking in conversation with others.

Regardless of whether students verbalised their critical thinking or not, they agreed throughout focus groups that it requires a conscious effort, indicating that although *“sometimes you do it subconsciously like, you don't realise you're doing it. But I think to be like a proper critical thinker, you should notice yourself doing it”* (C3GDFG2). Furthermore, students acknowledged that critical thinking was difficult, stating that *“critical thinkers use an effort, like you have to put in effort to be a critical thinker, and it's easier to stay in what you're usually thinking about”* (C3GEFG2).

8.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined the key findings from cycle three, and specifically, the findings in relation to the implementation of the Planning Tool. Guided by the research question, one of the key aims of this study has been to ascertain the factors which contribute to student motivation, participation and achievement. This chapter demonstrated that the implementation of the *Planning Tool* led to increased engagement and participation which supported students to develop their critical global learning skills. From my observations and multiple data sourced from students it was clear that students were enabled to question and critique issues and to share their responses and ideas more frequently and with more depth than in previous cycles as a result of the structured approach within the Planning Tool.

A second aim of the study has involved identifying the opportunities and barriers which impact on the implementation of critical global learning. This chapter highlighted the challenges and considerations which emerged during cycle three in relation to students' critical global learning skills. While the *Planning Tool* supported improved outcomes in comparison to previous cycles, it must be acknowledged that when teaching over four hundred students, it will never be possible to implement an approach which suits all of them equally. However, the challenges I encountered during cycle three will continue to inform and improve my practice going forward.

9 A Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning

9.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter Four, throughout this research study, I developed a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*. While the model's foundation came together in Chapter Four through a review of literature which informed my teaching, data collection, analysis and presentation of findings, the final structure for the model evolved throughout the three cycles in response to data collection and analysis. This chapter will outline the final structure of the model, how its elements relate to each other and how it was applied in practice.

9.2 The structure of the model

The final structure of the model (Figure 20) is the outcome of an iterative process engaged throughout the five years of the research project. The structure evolved in response to findings, in particular the use of the *Planning Tool* and critical conversations with colleagues. As I discussed the purpose of the model and the experience of using the *Planning Tool* with others, I began to consider the elements in relationship to one another and rearrange them into the visual outlined in Figure 20. While I first thought of the skills and the considerations within the model separately, through the use of the planning tool which integrates outcomes and conditions for learning alongside lesson elements, I began to consider them as part of an interrelated model which together could inform our understanding of how to teach critical global learning. Appendix A highlights the various iterations I went through before arriving at the final visual representation.

This model explores the intersections between critical thinking and GE and the consequent implications for teaching. As shown in Figure 20, the model consists of a commitment to criticality at its core and two arcs that move around it. The commitment at the core of the model is the focus around which all other elements of the model spin, and on which the model is dependent. The green arc on the right of the model details the skillset necessary for critical global learners to develop. The blue arc on the left includes the factors that educators should consider when approaching the teaching of critical global learning.

Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning

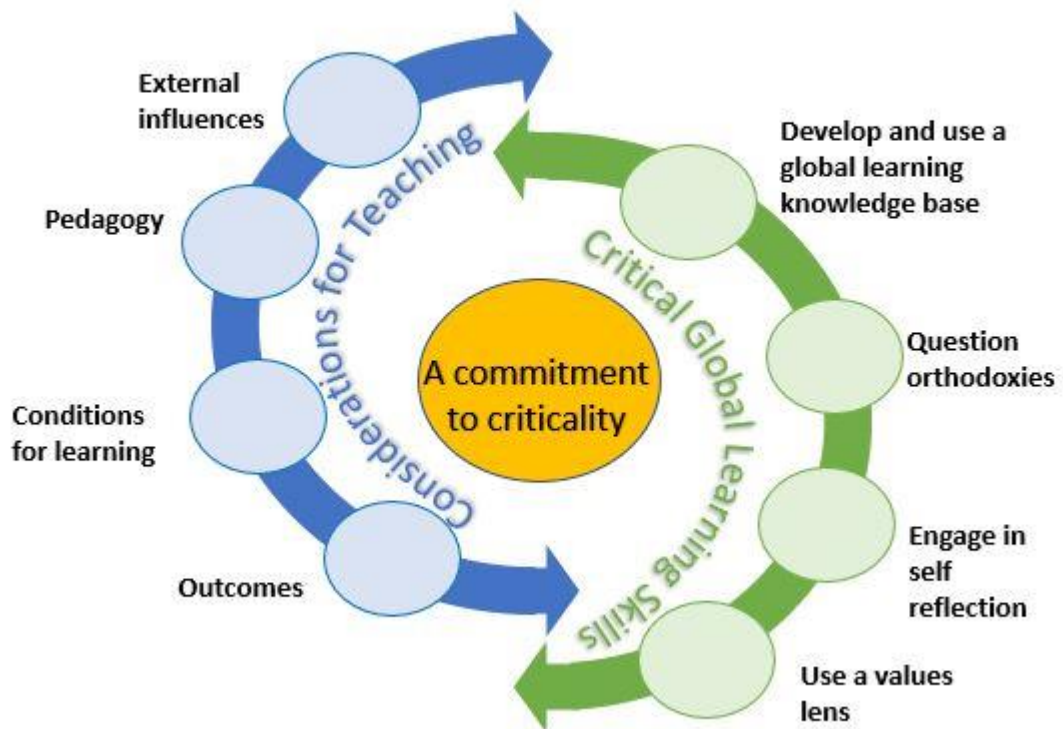


Figure 20: Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning

The two arcs have arrows on either end to indicate that they are in motion, should their arcs be completed, they would overlap, representing the ways in which they influence and impact each other. For example, students' development of the skillset on the green arc is dependent upon the conditions for learning and the pedagogy fostered in the classroom, both elements of the blue arc. Additionally, as students build their skillset, pedagogy can be adapted in response. The blue arc also includes consideration of external factors which may support or hinder students' acquisition of the skills. Finally, the personal and societal outcomes included as considerations for teaching depend upon the extent and manner in which students develop and apply the skillset included in the model.

In rearranging the model's components into the final visual representation, I was enabled to consider not just the core skills and considerations but also the sub-elements of each component. The complete model, including all sub-elements, is visible in Figure 21.

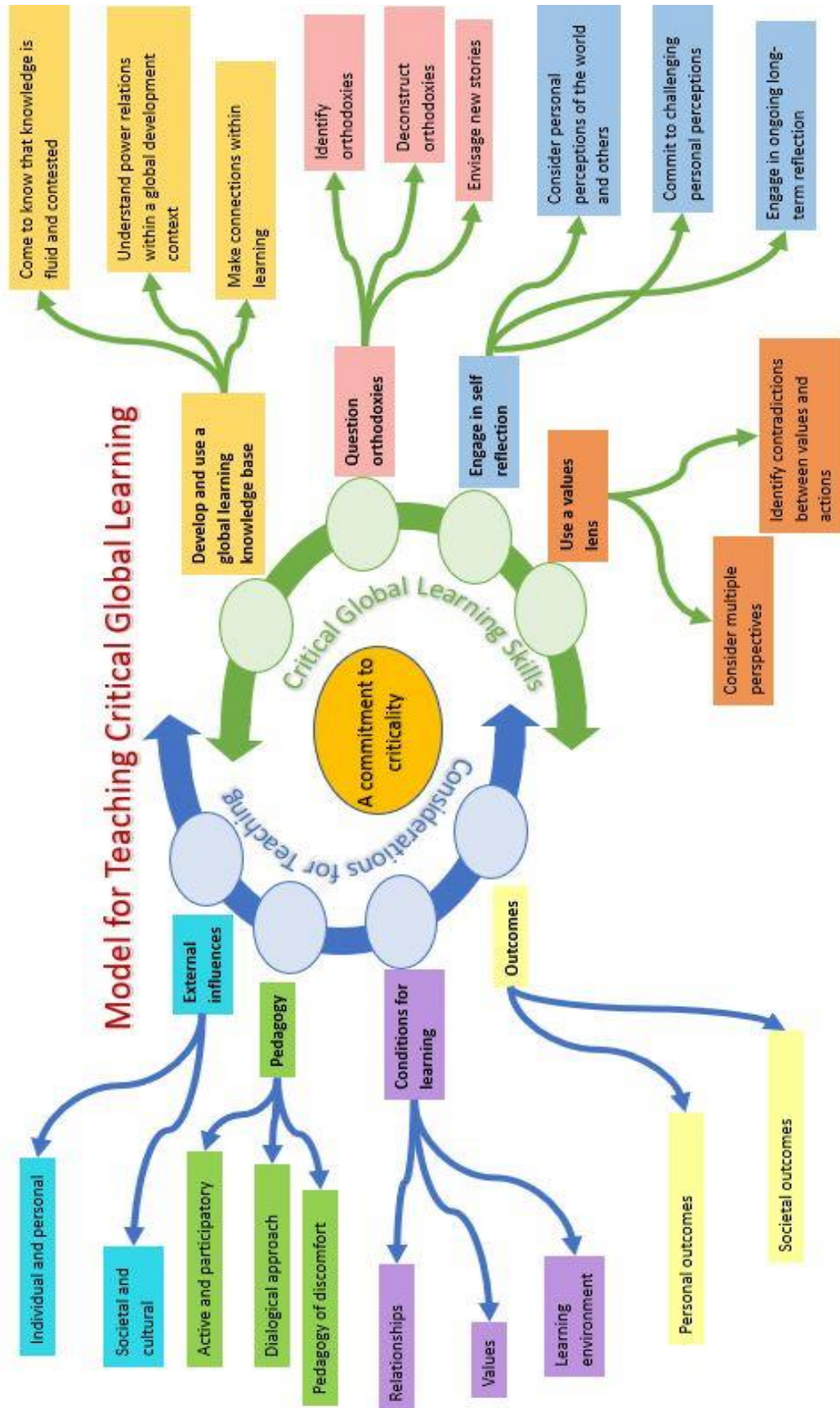


Figure 21: Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning including sub-elements

The components and structure of this model were continually developed and evolved throughout this thesis. The sub-elements visible in Figure 21 were honed and finalised following engagement with analysis and consideration of findings from this research. They represent best practice as reflected in literature, and reflect research-informed approaches in response to the findings from this research. The model remains open to change and evolution in response to new learning and to its application in different contexts. The arcs can be extended to include additional skills or considerations as our knowledge of teaching critical global learning evolves.

9.3 Application of the model

The principal way in which the model was used throughout the three cycles of data collection was to inform my planning and guide data collection and analysis. While the definitive structure of the model was not finalised until I had completed all data collection and analysis, the components of the model, arranged in a variety of ways throughout the years (Appendix A), were used to inform my discussions with Anna and Maria throughout. I used the model firstly as a means to explain the interpretation of critical global learning I was adopting and to illustrate what that would mean for students in the form of the skills within it. In our critical conversations Anna, Maria and I used the model as a tool to guide our discussions and consider the successes and challenges in my teaching as measured against the conceptual structure outlined in the model. While the Planning Tool was developed to support the implementation of the model with regards to practical classroom considerations and the organisation of lessons, the model provided an overarching conceptual structure which underpinned teaching and learning, and assessment within the modules.

The core critical global learning disposition at the centre of this model is a commitment to criticality which is presented as the crucial anchor necessary for students to become critical global learners and to develop and build on the skills included within this model. I visualised the commitment to criticality as the root of the model, the structure enclosing the model or the first step at various stages along the journey to the final iteration which places it at the centre of two revolving arcs. Throughout the process of data collection and

during the various iterations of the visualisation of the model, the commitment to criticality remained as a central focus of my teaching and analysis of data.

The right-hand arc provided support in planning the content, skills and dispositions I needed to focus on in designing sessions and the overall module. The variety of skills within the right-hand arc supported me in ensuring that I wasn't overly focused on content at the expense of time for skill and values development. The range in these skills were crucial in informing the lesson elements included in the Planning Tool.

While the core disposition and the four key skills provided direction for teaching and assessment, the left-hand arc provided a necessary context for teaching and learning by ensuring that core considerations were at the forefront of my mind while planning. For example, by attending to the element in relation to external factors, I ensured that I was considerate of the ways in which students' prior experiences could impact the learning experience and add to the knowledge base within the classroom. By trying to get to know students and providing opportunities for students to share their experiences and perspectives within the classroom, I was able to adapt my teaching and be responsive to the lived experiences of my students.

The principles reflected in the model highlight aspirational goals for classroom practice, however, the reality of the classroom challenged their implementation. External considerations such as personal experiences or societal influences impacted on the classroom and on students' tendency towards, and approach to, participation. I was also challenged by student contributions which challenged the ideals of equity and justice which required me to place different levels of value on different student contributions. Regardless of these challenges, it remained that focusing on relationships within the classroom, being attentive to external factors, and having a core set of skills to focus on enabled me to support authentic learning in the classroom and supported the ideals of critical global learning.

Although this model focuses on teaching critical global learning, it does not have a remit to prescribe engagement in any particular forms of action or to measure its impact beyond the classroom. Instead, by including within the left-hand arc considerations in relation to potential, and probable, impacts beyond the classroom, this model encouraged me to be

considerate of the broader societal impact of this work. In considering the possible outcomes for society, teacher educators can include space within the classroom for students to consider and reflect upon the possible impact they can have at a societal level. This can be done by encouraging students to think about and discuss the implications and responsibilities which arise from increased criticality.

Ultimately, the organisation of the model as a structure which is considerate of the holistic experience of teaching critical global learning is crucial to its success. The structure of the model provides a conceptualisation of the complete process of teaching and learning critical global learning which is considerate not just of the desired outcomes for students but intertwines our understanding of these outcomes with consideration for the varied factors which impact students learning.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, and how it evolved through an interaction between literature, detailed in Chapter Four, and findings detailed in Chapters Six and Eight. The model is attentive to the intersections between critical thinking and GE and the considerations necessary for teaching critical global learning. As outlined within this chapter, the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* includes a commitment to criticality at its core with two arcs in motion surrounding it. One arc is focused on the skills necessary for critical global learning. The second arc includes key considerations for educators to be mindful of when teaching critical global learning.

It is intended that this model be used by teacher educators to examine and consider their own practice in this field. The core commitment and skills provide the necessary focus for our teaching, learning and assessment, while the considerations within the model invite teacher educators to examine their approach to teaching and learning, and how it can be harnessed to better support students to develop their critical global learning skills and dispositions.

Chapter Ten will situate the findings from this study in the context of wider literature through identifying tensions which emerged across all three action research cycles.

10 Discussion

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter I use ‘tensions’ as a framework to present the key considerations for teacher education which emerged from data across three action research cycles. Berry (2008, p.32) uses the idea of tensions to:

capture the feelings of internal turmoil that many teacher educators experience in their teaching about teaching as they find themselves pulled in different directions by competing concerns, and the difficulties for teacher educators in learning to recognise and manage these opposing forces

Berry’s definition mirrors my experience of navigating the three action research cycles in this study. In my journey towards coming to know my practice better and make improvements to better support student teachers in their development of critical thinking skills in the context of GE, my progress was impacted by challenges, tensions and dilemmas which arose. The challenges I experienced reflected where conflict between competing considerations emerged in my practice.

The tensions presented in this chapter respond to the core question which this research project aimed to address:

What can be learned from a self-study action research project to contribute to the understanding and application of critical global learning for teacher educators?

The tensions outlined here represent the key considerations for teacher educators to be aware of when approaching the teaching of critical global learning. While the *Planning Tool* and the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* outlined in Chapters Seven and Nine are the core outcomes of this research project, the tensions within this chapter demonstrate what I have learned about teaching critical global learning throughout the three cycles of this research. It is in the ongoing practice of navigating these challenges that our understanding of the implementation of critical global learning within ITE is deepened. The tensions presented in this chapter also offer considerations in relation to the two aims which underpin my core research questions:

- *To ascertain the factors which contribute to student motivation, participation and achievement within critical global learning.*
- *To identify the opportunities and barriers which impact on the implementation of critical global learning within the institutional and national contexts that I work.*

Many of the tensions presented in this chapter arose as a result of my attempts to match my aspirations for students' learning with the reality of the teaching context and the individual circumstances students bring to the learning space. These tensions represent opportunities for both personal and professional growth. While I cannot propose definitive solutions to the tensions identified, I deepened my own reflexivity and improved my practices as a teacher educator through exploring and navigating responses to them. My navigation of these tensions throughout the three action research cycles has been informed by an ongoing dialogue between my experiences, data collected from students, conversations with critical friends and colleagues, and a continual exploration of literature.

Within Chapters Six and Eight I presented the findings from all three cycles of research. In both chapters, I used a structure of challenges and considerations to present my findings in relation to implementing critical global learning in the classroom. The challenges and considerations reflect the key learnings from each cycle which contributes to our understanding and application of critical global learning, the key research question this study explores. The tensions discussed in this chapter were developed through a process of distilling the challenges outlined in Chapters Six and Eight and consolidate outcomes to present tensions which were common to all three cycles of data collection. Tensions have been categorised under three headings as follows:

Pedagogical Tensions

- The 'performance' of teaching Versus. educator disposition;
- Rewarding critical thinking Versus. pushing students beyond their comfort zone;
- Focusing on content and knowledge Versus. the process of learning and skill development;
- Not honouring prejudiced perspectives by not including them Versus. including all perspectives and modelling how to question them;

Student Specific Tensions

- Students' individualised learning needs Versus. teaching to large cohorts;
- Students' personal attitudes to justice Versus responsibilities as future classroom teachers;

Tensions Rooted in External Influences

- Students primed for critical thinking from their background Versus. students unprepared for it;
- Students perception of issues informed by the media and society Versus. perspectives presented in GE;
- Approach to learning which was successful in second level education Versus. approach to learning promoted in higher education.

The tensions within each category will be explored in respect of their origins in the findings from this study and how they played out with respect to the *Planning Tool* implemented during cycle three. Subsequently, each tension will be discussed in relation to where it aligns with or diverges from literature. Finally, the relevance of each tension to furthering understanding of the implementation of critical global learning within ITE in response to my research question will be discussed.

10.2 Pedagogical Tensions

Although there were many pedagogical challenges and tension which emerged throughout the three action research cycles, the following three tensions represent the considerations which had greatest significance for my teaching.

10.2.1 The 'Performance' of Teaching Versus Educator Disposition

Throughout the three cycles of data collection my reflections consistently highlighted the impact my mood, enthusiasm, and wellbeing had on my teaching performance and the knock-on impact I perceived in student learning and engagement. Teaching in any setting requires a level of performance displayed through an educator's enthusiasm and energy in

the classroom to engage learners and support their learning (Good and Brophy, 2008). However, the energy which educators have at their disposal to enhance their teaching can depend on many factors external to the classroom such as a their wellbeing on a given day, and their personal or professional circumstances. Consequently, a tension exists between the benefits of enthusiastic, engaged teaching and the changeableness of teacher-wellbeing given the myriad factors which can influence it.

McCallum et al. (2017, p.3) posit that “teachers are the most important in-school factor contributing to student success, satisfaction and achievement”. Furthermore, through an empirical study, Turner and Theilking (2019) determined that when educators focused on improving their wellbeing, there was a notable and significant impact on learning. When teacher-wellbeing is higher, teachers find themselves more present and engaged in the classroom and resultingly better able to recognise and respond to learners’ needs which results in improved learning outcomes (Caufield, 2018; Turner and Theilking, 2019). High levels of teacher-wellbeing are often expressed in the classroom through an enthusiastic approach to teaching (McCallum et al., 2017; Holmes, 2018). König (2020, p.1) posits that enthusiasm is communicated through “diverse behavioural expressions, such as nonverbal (e.g. gestures) and verbal (e.g. tone of voice) behaviours”. They (ibid) highlight that enthusiasm displayed by educators can impact on learner achievement, motivation, and enjoyment of their learning.

While an educators’ enthusiasm can be a critical factor in supporting student learning, the authenticity of that enthusiasm also impacts on student engagement and learning. Keller et al. (2018) found a correlation between enjoyment and engagement with lessons and the authenticity of the enthusiasm displayed by educators. Through their research they (ibid) were able to show that learners could identify instances where educators were exaggerating their enthusiasm and that this led to lower levels of enjoyment and engagement with learning. Furthermore, through their research in higher education settings, Johnson and LaBelle (2017) identified learners’ markers of authentic educators. They (ibid, p.429) determined that authentic educators are “approachable, passionate, attentive, capable, and knowledgeable”. While admirable qualities, each of these behaviours can require significant effort and energy and be impacted by an educators’ level of wellbeing on a given day. Additionally, Johnson and LaBelle (2017, p.429) posit that “teachers who are

authentically approachable do not simply go through the motions of being a teacher or acting professional; instead, they willingly share their lives with students and attempt to engage students in doing likewise”. This aspect of educator authenticity is significant to the fields of critical thinking and GE which both promote self-reflection and encourage students to share their own perceptions and values in the classroom.

It was my experience that having a structured approach prepared for lectures supported both my teaching performance and my wellbeing. The structure of the *Planning Tool* enabled me to ensure students had sufficient opportunities to engage with the materials even when my own wellbeing didn't allow me to teach with the level of energy I would like. I was enabled to focus on mitigating the impact of negative wellbeing on my teaching performance in the classroom by ensuring that by design, lessons had opportunities for students to engage with their learning and there were prompt questions and critical responses built into the lessons and represented in the classroom environment as a reminder. On days when I had less energy and enthusiasm to share with students, I remained better able to 'perform' while teaching in the knowledge that I had a structured approach to the lesson to rely on, which reduced my stress in relation to responding to unpredictability in the classroom. My learning about the value of a structured approach can support other teacher educators to examine the approach they take to planning and examining the extent to which this hinders or supports their teaching performance and wellbeing. Rewarding Critical Thinking Versus Pushing Students Beyond Their Comfort Zones

While teaching I was conscious of a fine line in my approach between rewarding criticality when I observed it and encouraging students to push beyond their comfort zones. This became especially apparent when I discussed sessions with Anna and we noticed instances where I was satisfied with student demonstrated criticality, but in a similar scenario, Anna pushed students to develop their thinking or questioning further. While encouragement often supported student engagement and pushing them sometimes resulted in disengagement, by praising low levels of criticality students can incorrectly infer that they have done 'enough'. Good and Brophy (2008) caution against inauthentic praise or 'gushing', highlighting that this can confuse learners who require accurate feedback to progress their learning. Both Anna and I were conscious of some students' tendencies to

become defensive and disengage from their learning when they felt challenged. In trying to mitigate against this reaction in students I found it difficult to find the right balance between praise and encouragement, and pushing students further and possibly causing disengagement.

The defensiveness that we were aware of in our teaching reflects similar findings from research in multicultural education. Classroom teachers and student teachers were found to sometimes tend towards defensiveness when confronted with information or teaching approaches which they felt were a challenge to their lifestyle or identity (Ukpokodu, 2002; Lucas, 2010). Baily and Katradis (2016) also found that when engaging with issues of social justice, educators often shifted back and forth between engaging and disengaging from content that challenged their prior perceptions of the world. As established previously, one of the key aims of critical global learning is to encourage students to question orthodoxies. However, orthodoxies by definition are deeply engrained in society, and so to question them could be difficult for people who perceive some of them as foundational to their identity. This challenge to their identities and perception of the world could cause students to become defensive and disengaged if pushed too far.

In endeavouring to push students beyond their comfort zones I aimed to honour Boler's (1999) call to engage a 'pedagogy of discomfort' in the classroom which encourages students to embody a 'flexible sense of self' and consider 'disruptive possibilities' as they question the status quo. While recognising that this approach to teaching can result in strong emotional responses and ultimately disengagement, Faulkner (2012) encourages educators to use the pedagogical approach as a means to support learners to recognise where their reactions are rooted in societal practices and to move beyond these in engaging in critical questioning. Although Faulkner's contention is encouraging, the lived reality of finding the optimum balance remains a challenging tension for educators.

This tension between rewarding and pushing students also reflects considerations in relation to the level of scaffolding to incorporate into teaching. The concept of the zone of proximal development devised by Vygotsky (1978) states that within this zone learners are supported to move from the unknown to the known through scaffolded support from a person with more knowledge than them, often an educator. Through scaffolded support and modelling, over time learners should progress to be able to master a task independently

(Wass et al., 2010). Although the ultimate aim is that students become independent critical thinkers, due to the short timeframe available in modules, some students may not leave the zone of proximal development during their time with me and will need continual scaffolded support to learn the skills of critical thinking.

This tension contributes to our understanding of student motivation, participation and achievement, one of the core aims of this research. Developing an understanding of the underlying factors which may cause students to become defensive and consequently disengaged in the classroom enables us as teacher educators to continually reimagine the levels of support we offer students in response to their contributions during classes.

10.2.2 Focusing on Content and Knowledge versus the Process of Learning and Skill Development

When planning for GE modules prior to cycle three, I usually considered the overall module only from the perspective of the order I would cover topics in and the broad learning outcomes I was focusing on throughout. My planning would predominantly focus on individual lessons. As there are so many topics to cover in GE, each week I would focus on a new topic and I centred my planning around the topics rather than broader consideration of the module. By introducing the *Planning Tool*, I was enabled to consider not only what knowledge the students would engage with in each session, but how I could support students to incrementally build up their skills throughout the module too. The new approach that I took to planning in cycle three highlighted the tension I was continually navigating between planning for the module as a whole, which included broad considerations but not the detail of how to achieve them, versus planning individual lessons, which focused on the practicality of facilitating learning each week but could easily lose sight of the bigger picture. The operational implications of this tension are found in the ongoing balancing act between focusing on knowledge and content delivery versus skill development and the process of learning. An emphasis on individual sessions takes a hyper focus on content, whereas approaching planning from the perspective of the overall module focuses predominantly on the process of learning.

The tension between content delivery and development of skills, values and attitudes is not unique to this study or context. Berlak and Berlak (1981) also highlighted the dilemma

facing educators in the way they conceptualise and present knowledge, having to decide between a focus on facts and information versus the process of thinking and reasoning. Additionally, this tension is connected to one of the potential downfalls of critical thinking. When overly focused on developing questioning skills at the expense of building a knowledge base, critical thinking can manifest as hostility (Zelnick, 2008). Fundamentally, a person's ability to engage in high quality critical thinking is dependent upon their depth of knowledge on the topic (Bailin et al., 1999). Furthermore, Standish (2012) shared his apprehension about the tendency for GE to be overly focused on values and skills which he claims has resulted in a reduction in content knowledge. In his critique of common GE approaches, Standish (2012) recommends a refocusing on topics in isolation to allow for learners to gain a greater depth of knowledge before attempting to make connections or develop critiques.

However, too strong a focus on content sharing and delivery is also cause for concern. In opposing the 'banking' approach to education, Freire (1970) advocates instead for an approach to education which promotes the invention and re-invention of knowledge through dialogue and debate. Freire's work encourages educators to think beyond didactic means of teaching and rather than denouncing the teaching of all knowledge, Freire's approach encourages educators to be mindful of the way in which knowledge is presented to, and created with, learners. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that the educator was not the keeper of knowledge, but that valid information originates in all communities and groups. He (ibid) encouraged a dialogical approach to teaching that encourages learners to engage with the information being shared rather than blindly accepting it.

The *Planning Tool* attempts to address this tension in its lesson elements which include a focus on presenting content in a challenging way while providing opportunities for students to engage with that information and develop their reflection and questioning skills. Although the implementation of the *Planning Tool* during cycle three helped to mitigate some of the operational challenges which arose from this tension, it was not a perfect solution. While focusing on the overall module helped me to ensure skills and values were incrementally built upon throughout the module, there was still a need to ensure appropriate and sufficient content was being delivered in each individual topic. As a GE educator, there is a need to be able to teach about a wide variety of topics which I

found challenging when approaching issues, I felt less comfortable with and I relied on Anna in those instances to step in as a subject expert.

One of the core aims of this research has been to identify opportunities and barriers which impacted on the implementations of critical global learning within my context. As outlined, the nature of GE, given the wide breath of topics it encompasses, in combination with the practical restraints of a module limited by time can be a barrier. Furthermore, another barrier evident within this tension is the isolating nature of higher education due to definitive subject divisions. However, being able to reach out to others when you can identify a gap in your own skill set is an opportunity which helps to ensure that not only does the module work as a whole but that students receive the best teaching on each topic area.

10.2.3 Not honouring Prejudiced Perspectives by Excluding Them Versus Including all Perspectives and Modelling how to Question Them

Throughout the three cycles of data collection I was aware that not all students held the same values as the module promoted. Students did not often openly vocalise their opposition but I was aware of it through their body language or through overheard comments or discussions. Although infrequent, instances where students expressed strong discriminatory viewpoints in the classroom often overshadowed contributions which upheld the values of GE. As an educator, I felt a responsibility to respond to what emerged in the classroom. However, I often struggled with this task. I observed that at times students with diverging viewpoints seemed to have their own perspectives strengthened by defending them against those presented by the module. As a result, I identified and struggled with the tension between not honouring prejudiced perspectives by not including them within my teaching versus including those divergent ideas as an opportunity to model how to respond to and critique them. The Radicalisation Awareness Network (2019), a branch of the European Commission, found that when students express prejudiced or far-right extremist views in the classroom, even if coming from a small proportion of students, the environment in the classroom can become uncomfortable. In a similar vein, Khan (2019) highlights the narrow line between free speech and hate speech by outlining that while freedom of speech is a precious right, when used to provoke hatred or division, it can be extremely damaging.

The inclusion of multiple diverging perspectives in the classroom is in line with critical thinking theory, which advocates for learners to examine diverse viewpoints and formulate responses (Bok, 2006; Dwyer et al., 2014; Paul and Elder, 2016). As highlighted in Chapter Six, following discussions with students and colleagues, I created more opportunities for students to share their perspectives during cycle two, but struggled to find appropriate ways to respond to discriminatory values which emerged. This challenge became an important factor in designing the *Planning Tool* for cycle three. The *Planning Tool* provided an opportunity which supported me to include opportunities for a variety of perspectives to be aired in the classroom, while ensuring that I was prepared with strategies and frameworks to challenge them. However, it was not possible to accurately respond to all instances with such a large cohort, and it is inevitable that many perspectives went unnoticed and consequently unchallenged during the module. It became clear that the group and cohort sizes I was working with was a barrier which compromised my ability to respond to all views present in the classroom.

Encouraging the inclusion of a diversity of perspectives in the classroom, Pollard (2018) maintains that left-leaning classroom can be intimidating for learners who hold opposing views or values. He (ibid) highlights that learners' capacity to develop critical thinking skills would be hampered in a space oriented towards only one perspective. Similarly, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (2019) encourage educators not to shy away from right-wing perspectives, but to engage in open conversations with those who express them. Additionally, Khan (2019) highlights that educators have a responsibility, due to their positions of power in the classroom, to confront the status-quo and represent the voices of the marginalised. By including and exploring different perspectives on a topic both students and educators are enabled to consider the issue from different angles and to disrupt common narratives and one-sided stories through dialogue and debate.

Following reflection and discussions with colleagues and mentors, I made the decision to actively include dissenting and alternative perspectives in my teaching during cycle three. I used it as an opportunity to model questioning and challenging those perspectives and provided space for students to share their variety of opinions and respond to each other's ideas. Although I was confident that the approach I designed was the right choice to support students on their journey towards critical global learning, I remained apprehensive

about my abilities to respond appropriately when confronted with viewpoints I found challenging. My uneasiness is reflected in Shor and Freire's (1987, p.61) contention that "because education is politics, it makes sense for the liberating teacher to feel some fear when he or she is teaching". Despite not having a catch-all solution for responding to challenging viewpoints in the classroom, my experiences and conclusions in relation to the importance of consciously including dissenting viewpoints in the classroom contributes to our knowledge base on the application of critical global learning in ITE.

10.3 Student Specific Tensions

The second category is concerned with tensions which relate specifically to students and the challenges inherent in responding to a diversity of student needs and responses to GE.

10.3.1 Students' Individualised Learning Needs versus Teaching Large Student Cohorts

Each student comes to the learning space with individual backgrounds and needs. However, when working with large numbers of students every week, it was very challenging, and often impossible, to find ways to be responsive to the individuality of issues students experienced. Indeed, this tension provides key considerations for one of the key aims of this study as the size of the cohort and individual groups was found to be a key factor which impacted negatively on student motivation, participation and achievement. This presented a tension between the approach to teaching I endeavoured to embody through building relationships with students and the practical implications of managing a cohort of such a large size.

Responding to student individuality is of critical importance within the context of promoting critical global learning. GE includes controversial and sensitive topics which often necessitate that students receive a significant level of support in their exploration and interpretation of them. Topics can cause different responses from students depending on their own backgrounds and preconceived ideas related to the issues being explored. Some students can find it easy to take on board new ideas while others can react defensively when presented with topics that challenge their perceptions. The topics involved in GE can incite strong emotions from all students irrespective of their background. When working with large groups within the context of a very large cohort, my ability to respond

effectively to the individual and varied responses of students is always compromised, regardless of the intensity of their need or my own pedagogical beliefs.

When educators have the opportunity to engage with all students in the class, they can use the information they gain about student knowledge and perceptions to shape and inform their teaching. Woollacott et al. (2014, p.747) refer to this knowledge as educators coming to know their students in “pedagogically meaningful ways”. Large group and cohort sizes limited my ability to inform my teaching in this way. Without this knowledge it can be easy to lack awareness of the variety of needs and experiences students bring to the teaching space.

Woollacott et al. (2014, p.748) contend that “it is well known that the better you know the students you are teaching the better placed you are to help them in their learning”.

Furthermore, Hornsby and Osman (2014) draw on a range of empirical research studies and assert that class size impacts on the quality of the learning environment. In particular, they link large class sizes with low performance. Ultimately, Hornsby and Osman (2014) posit that the key challenge posed by large class sizes and large student cohorts is the transition from learning styles used in secondary education to those promoted within higher education. In higher education students are usually asked to engage in problem solving and critical thinking skills rather than memorization of facts or rote learning typical of secondary education. Large class sizes lend themselves to a more didactic teaching style which can inhibit an educator’s ability to nurture the very skills they are trying to promote (Hornsby and Osman, 2014). Resultingly, not only is teaching large groups not conducive to the promotion of higher order cognitive skills such as critical thinking it can actively inhibit the development of skills that rely on engagement, dialogue and feedback to flourish.

To counteract the challenge of getting to know students as individuals within large cohorts, Woollacott et al. (2014) recommend getting to know the ‘idealised types’ of students in your class by identifying the various ways that students conceptualise or experience different topics. Without opportunities to come to know students as individuals and respond accordingly, the approach recommended by Woollacott et al. (2014) allows educators to prepare for a variety of potential student responses by observing and categorising what they notice generally in their students’ engagement. The development

and implementation of the *Planning Tool* used in cycle three assisted me in focusing on developing relationships with students in the ways outlined in Chapter Eight. Additionally, using small group activities during each class enabled me to circulate around the room and observe and interact with a large number of students and notice trends in their learning and engagement. These two approaches supported me in getting to know the various ways that students conceptualised and experienced topics, which I was able to then use in my planning and teaching.

10.3.2 Students' Personal Attitudes to Justice versus Responsibilities as Future Classroom Teachers

Throughout the modules, students were encouraged to develop their own understandings and attitudes concerning the topics that were addressed. This approach is in line with the principles of critical thinking and of GE which promote self-reflection and follow democratic ideologies in honouring student voice. However, an effort was made to guide students towards values and principles that were in line with GE such as justice and human rights. As part of this approach, diverging attitudes were problematised and questioned during classes, particularly during cycle three. Although students were encouraged to consider justice issues through the values being promoted, they remained free to align themselves with a value-set of their choice. Many students tended to distance themselves from issues and failed to incorporate the complexity of justice issues in their consideration of them, and continued to approach them from simplistic perspectives. While this attitude is problematic, albeit common, at a societal level, I felt that it presented a specific tension in this context when juxtaposed with their responsibilities as future classroom teachers. As classroom teachers these students will have a significant impact on shaping societal viewpoints and attitudes towards justice issues which could serve to either perpetuate stereotypes and unjust systems or begin to question, challenge and dismantle them.

The distancing and simplification of issues I observed from some students is not a reaction that is unique to this setting. Often when learning about complex and difficult topics, there can be a tendency for people to gloss over the historical context of current inequality and the responsibility of wealthier western nations for the underdevelopment of other countries and groups (Andreotti, 2006; Straubhaar, 2015). The oversimplification of inequality is often evident when the division between rich and poor is presented as a result of luck

rather than unearned privilege for some at the expense of others (Straubhaar, 2015). This perception is mirrored in findings from research in both the UK and in Ireland. It was found that the general public often viewed poverty as an internal issue for countries in the global south and had limited knowledge or awareness of the role of western countries in perpetuating and reproducing poverty (Darnton and Kirk, 2011; Amárach, 2013). Although students were presented with this broader context within the module, many still failed to adapt their own thinking to reflect this. Presenting inequality as an accident of luck is reflective of the approach often seen in media and charitable campaigns (McCurdy, 2016) and so it is not surprising to see it also reflected in students. However, it is harmful because the perpetuation of an oversimplification of development can hamper the potential for change and meaningful action as it negates the need to consider personal and collective responsibility.

As outlined in Chapter Eight, in an effort to counteract this reaction from students, I provided additional opportunities for students to engage in self-reflection in cycle three. The *Planning Tool* enabled me to ensure that self-reflection featured as a component of all sessions. Additionally, I focused on ensuring the connections we each have to systems of power were made more explicit, aiming to counteract the idea that international power structures are separate from our everyday lives. The challenging approach to content was underpinned in all sessions by this structural understanding of inequality. The findings from cycle three do not show the same tendency that emerged in cycles one and two for students to oversimplify or misinterpret justice issues. While it is not possible to claim that this tendency was removed entirely, there was evidence of students being more open to grappling with the complexity of justice issues. The improvement I experienced in students' attitudes to and interpretation of justice issues highlights that the approaches I adopted which prompted this change were key factors which contributed to student participation and achievement.

Definitions of GE, and its constituent educational approaches, consistently include the need for learners to make personal connections with what they are learning and come to understand their place in the world (Tormey, 2003; Danesh, 2008; Bourn, 2015a; Irish Aid, 2017). From a GE perspective, Shah and Brown (2010) and Andreotti (2006) highlight the transformative potential of self-reflection, stressing that self-reflection and an openness to

challenging your viewpoints can be the catalyst which leads to engagement in change for a more just and sustainable world. While self-reflection is a core critical thinking skill and an important element of GE, it must be acknowledged that it can be unsettling for the learner who may find themselves confronted with uncomfortable considerations about their own prejudices and place in the world (Bourn, 2015a).

The contrasting interpretations and attitudes that students emerge with from their engagement with GE is of critical importance to their futures careers. Consequently, within the field of ITE, there is a need to continue to challenge the normative narratives around justice and challenge students to understand and care about unequal power distribution and recognition and become aware of the way in which systems perpetuate and maintain unequal power structures (Waldron, 2014).

10.4 Tensions Rooted in External Influences

Some of the challenges which emerged during data analysis related to tensions which were beyond my control as they originated outside of the classroom and related to students personal lives and societal influences. All three tensions within this category contribute to answering one of the aims of this research; to ascertain the factors which contribute to student motivation, participation and achievement within critical global learning.

10.4.1 Students Primed for Critical Thinking from their Background versus Students Unprepared for it

In addition to the impact that my teaching approach had on students learning, I also noticed that there were differences in students' intrinsic tendency to engage with critical thinking. Irrespective of the levels of enthusiasm, authenticity and energy that I brought to my teaching, there were always some students who were consistently engaged and enthusiastic about developing their criticality and others who were less eager and tended to disengage from both individual sessions and the module as a whole. This disparity reflected a tension for my teaching in identifying approaches that would work for both students who were easy to reach and those who were hard to reach. While I noticed an improvement during cycle three when I designed and implemented a plan to make sessions consistently

engaging and to follow a predictable format for students, this tension was still present as some students remained uninterested.

The differences in students' enthusiasm presented difficulties for me pedagogically. However, the difference in students' levels of preparedness for criticality posed a challenge for them in their learning. Where students arrived in the learning space with prior experience of critical thinking and an interest in developing their skills, they found the module less challenging than those who did not have relevant prior experiences. In our conversations, Anna, and I concluded that one of the influencing factors which led to students being ill-prepared to engage in critical thinking was the lack of diversity within the programme. We observed that students were often not familiar with encountering a diversity of perspectives which would lead them to re-evaluate or challenge their own. The teaching profession, especially at primary level, is well documented internationally to be very homogenous (Hyland, 2012; Keane and Heinz, 2015). In Ireland, the overwhelming majority of students in ITE are white, Irish, Catholic, female and middle-class (Keane and Heinz, 2015). My experience of this homogeneity was that it limited the student learning experience due to the lack of diversity of experiences and perspectives being shared amongst peers. The conclusions that I came to are mirrored by research which concluded that exposure to diversity is a critical influencing factor in the development of complex thought processes such as critical thinking for students in higher education (Loes et al., 2012; Pascarella et al., 2014). Furthermore, Ryan (2013a) posits that reflective thinking is not intuitive, and that student competency in self-reflection should not be taken for granted. Indeed, students' prior experiences of engaging with reflection can impact on student competency levels. Students frequently talked about their prior experiences of education, particularly at second level, not helping them to develop criticality or reflective skills.

As a teacher educator, awareness of the factors which impact on students critical thinking tendencies is very important in informing my planning. In acknowledging that many students come to higher education unprepared for critical thinking, and that ITE cohorts are often homogenous which can impede criticality, it is crucial to then accept responsibility for ensuring students learning includes exposure to diversity and a slow, structured approach to building criticality skills. The findings presented in Chapter Eight highlight

that the use of the *Planning Tool* supported students to make progress in terms of their criticality due to the structured and paced approach.

10.4.2 Student Perception of Issues from the Media and Society versus Perspectives Presented in the Module

An additional factor which impacts on student's preparedness for criticality is the conceptualisation of justice issues and global development which is pervasive in the media and society generally and which students often bring with them into their learning, impacting their participation and achievement. Students often cited the pre-conceived ideas they held about justice issues at the outset of modules which were often influenced by the images and narratives they had been exposed to through media and often in school textbooks. The perspectives presented within these modules are often in contrast to those presented in charity advertisements and other media representations of development issues. It can be challenging for students to find themselves confronted with perspectives which contrast with their prior conceptualisations and this can cause defensiveness or disengagement. This tension requires teacher educators to navigate the divergent conceptualisations of development and justice issues in ways that do not alienate students but broaden their awareness and challenges them to question their perceptions.

Andreotti and deSouza (2008b) highlight that we all arrive in the learning space with our own cultural baggage. This means that our perspectives are socially, culturally and historically situated which can influence how we all engage with new knowledge (ibid). Similarly, Keating (2007, p.122) proclaims that we are all born into "a reality filled with customs, stories, and myths that have already been recirculated countless times". The 'cultural baggage' that learners bring to their learning in GE is often in the form of a charity mentality, which involves learning about the 'other' and 'helping' them (Tallon, 2012). Simpson (2016) posits that this mentality has not developed or significantly changed in decades. This approach to development and justice issues places the power to enact change in the hands of those in the global north and presents an image of the global south as helpless (Simpson, 2016). This attitude is neo-colonial and is problematic in its simplification of development and in its erasure of our responsibility in the global north in creating and perpetuating systems of inequality.

Hunt (2020) identifies that a key characteristic of a global learning school is that it has adopted a critical social justice approach. Moving away from a charity mentality and a focus on fundraising as a solution to issues of justice and inequality is promoted by many as a core tenet of the traditions within GE (Andreotti, 2006; Bourn, 2015a; Simpson, 2016; Hunt, 2020). In contrast to a charity approach, a social justice approach to education requires critical engagement and a commitment to continually questioning power structures and justice (Hunt, 2020).

Gallant (2008) maintains that power structures are often established and advanced through dominant discourses and highlights that in acknowledging this, we can also conclude that they can therefore be changed through examining, questioning and redefining the discourses which shape our lives. GE encourages learners to ‘open their eyes to the reality of the world’ (CoE, 2002) which highlights it as an educational approach which is committed to unravelling, challenging and retelling commonly held perspectives through uncovering root causes behind issues of injustice. Accordingly, GE holds the critical potential to counteract this tendency by encouraging students to unpack and question prevalent orthodoxies they encounter. This tension responds not just to the research aim focused on factors that influence student motivation, but also to the research aim to identify opportunities and barriers impacting on the implementation of critical global learning. In navigating this tension, I highlight the opportunities which exist within ITE including in my context to embrace the potential for GE to counteract orthodoxies with students.

10.4.3 Approach to Learning which was Successful in Second Level Education versus the Approach Promoted in Higher Education

Throughout the three rounds of data collection, students in each group repeatedly highlighted the significant difference between the approach to learning that was required during their secondary school education, and the critical thinking they were being asked to engage with in college. Most students who participated in this study had recently come

from the Leaving Certificate programme⁵ (LCP) where they performed well above average in order to secure a place on the B.Ed. programme. Students in this study often cited the limiting influence the LCP had on them and their resultant challenging experiences of trying to engage with critical thinking in college. I found myself navigating the tension between the differences in teaching approaches that students were familiar with and those common in higher education. Students also struggled to navigate this tension. They were challenged to rethink their approach to education and to learn new skills in order to succeed in higher education.

It is well documented that the LCP in Ireland, which emphasises the importance of critical and creative thinking in its documentation (NCCA, 2009), in practice is heavily reliant on memory recall rather than higher order thinking skills (Burns et al., 2018). Shortcomings of the LCP can be aligned with a lack of emphasis on ‘higher-order skills’ which O’Leary and Scully (2018, p.2) define as inclusive of “understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating various forms of information”. They (ibid) juxtapose these skills with the recall of factual information, the predominant skill usually associated with the LCP.

The Irish education system in general is held in high regard internationally, with post-primary pupils consistently performing above the OECD average in international testing of literacy, mathematics, and science (OECD, 2018). However, O’Leary and Scully (2018) highlight the question posed by many in the field of education, namely whether the LCP is fit for purpose. In their overview of senior cycle education, the NCCA state that education should contribute to “the promotion of social cohesion, the recovery and growth of the economy and the adoption of the principle of sustainability in all aspects of development” (NCCA, 2009, p.6). They (ibid) envision that through engagement with the LCP, pupils should be supported to develop as people, as citizens, and as learners. However, there is a clear tension between the vision the NCCA declare and the experience of pupils on the ground. If the purpose of the LCP is to contribute to social cohesion and support pupil

⁵ The Leaving Certificate Programme is comprised of the final two years of post-primary education in Ireland, culminating in a series of state-run exams which dictate learner’s eligibility for entry into higher education.

development, the focus on high stakes summative testing of lower-order recall skills does not match this goal. The focus of the LCP on memory recall is characteristic of international approaches to high stakes testing which typically do not assess criticality or other higher order skills due to a focus on performativity (Ball, 2016). The result is that students are disadvantaged from the outset when they enter college. In order to get a place in higher education, they have to refine their memory recall skills and not employ creative or critical thinking during assessments to achieve high grades. They are then at a disadvantage when entering higher education and being informed that this approach will not help them to succeed and are instead asked to employ criticality in their assessment submissions. Thus, students' prior experiences of high stakes testing impacted on their motivation, participation and achievement within critical global learning when they came to ITE.

From my observations, reflections, and data generated by students in classes, focus groups and surveys, it was clear that many students overcame the challenge of adapting to a new approach to learning. However, it was critical for me in my practice to be considerate of the transition on which students were embarking. I found that the *Planning Tool* supported me in ensuring that I was consistent in providing students with opportunities to practice their critical thinking skills, something which they frequently cited as crucial for them in growing their critical thinking skills.

10.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I identified the core tensions which arose during data collection for this study. Although unable to offer definitive solutions to these tensions, by contextualising my own findings within broader literature, I discussed some of the implications and considerations relating to these tensions. Throughout this chapter I have identified where my navigation of each tension has contributed to answering the core research question and aims of this research project. While the tensions within this chapter originated within my study, they represent challenges and opportunities for reflection for others working within ITE, and within the fields of critical thinking and GE. The conclusion to this thesis in Chapter Eleven provides an overview of the thesis as a whole, responds to the research question and aims, and offers recommendations based on my findings.

11 Conclusion

11.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a summary of the research undertaken in this study and presents the outcomes of a comprehensive literature review, methodological decisions made and the findings which emerged. In returning to and responding to my research question and the goals of this research project, I present the outcomes of this thesis as a conceptual framework which informs our understanding of, and offers a structured approach to, implementing critical global learning within ITE. Additionally, I share the limitations I experienced in undertaking this research and reflect on my findings in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, I present a suite of recommendations rooted in the findings of this study.

11.2 Overview of Study

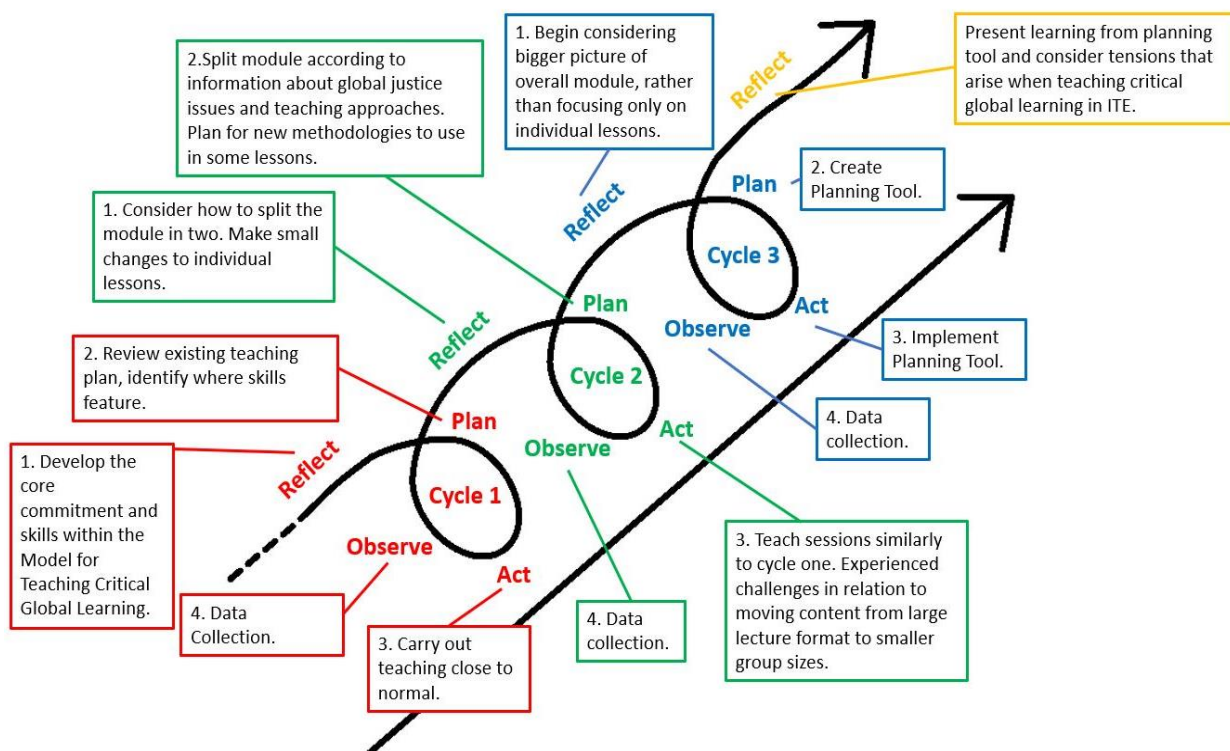


Figure 22: Thesis Overview

As outlined in Chapter Five, the methodological approach in this study was iterative, messy, and responsive to context and emerging challenges. Self-study action research

enabled me to delve into and become more conscious of my own practices as a teacher educator in the process of exploring how my students experienced critical global learning. As highlighted in Figure 22, this process was not linear but included multiple interconnected cycles of reflecting, planning, acting, and observing. While this process formally lasted for three succinct cycles, the dashed line indicates that cycle one built on my prior experiences as a teacher educator delivering the modules being explored. The arrow at the top of the cycle loops signposts my commitment to continue to apply the stages of action research to my teaching into the future to inform and improve my practice. Beneath the action research loops is a long arrow indicating the directionality of the process. This arrow represents my commitment to investing in my learning journey and indicates that as I progressed through the cycles, I consistently developed my practice and made improvements.

To prepare for cycle one, drawing on current literature within the fields of critical thinking, GE and ITE, I developed the skills and core commitment of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* which informed my teaching and focused my reflections. Following this cycle, the module underwent structural changes. These changes resulted in many of my sessions moving from large groups (in excess of 120 students) to smaller groups (60 students). While I made small changes to individual activities or sessions for cycle two, I found that this approach did not sufficiently meet the needs of my students or adequately respond to the switch from large group to smaller group teaching. Consequently, in preparing for cycle three I began to consider the bigger picture of the overall module, which led to the development of the *Planning Tool* which I then implemented and tested during cycle three. The yellow box at the top of Figure 22 relates to the findings presented in this thesis. In Chapter Eight, I presented the findings from cycle three, and in Chapter Nine I shared some tensions which emerged from all three cycles that relate to the inclusion of critical global learning within ITE.

Over the three cycles I made continual improvements to my practices, to the methodological approaches I used, and to the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and the *Planning Tool*. The flexible nature of action research enabled me to adapt my data collection approaches continually in response to my setting and emerging findings. Additionally, while the model began as a framework of skills, in response to my

experience of using it as a framework for my teaching it evolved to include considerations for teaching and became a *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*. Furthermore, all elements of the *Planning Tool* underwent continuous refinement in response to student-led data, conversations with critical friends, feedback from peers, and my experience of implementing it.

11.3 Addressing my Research Question and Aims through the Development of a Conceptual Framework

The core research question which this study addressed is:

What can be learned from a self-study action research project to contribute to the understanding and application of critical global learning for teacher educators?

The core learning from this research project has been:

1. The validation of self-study action research as a powerful methodological tool for teacher educators. Guided by a rich literature- and research-informed best practice it holds the potential to significantly impact on our understanding, and awareness of personal practice and provides opportunities to proactively adapt, change and improve practice.
2. The realisation that engaging with the teaching of critical global learning is personally and professionally challenging as it necessitates that teacher educators actively and continually evaluate personal perceptions and beliefs both about the world and education in light of their practice, often highlighting contradictions between both to be addressed.
3. The unique insight offered by the research findings highlight the crucial nature of applying a research-informed and structured approach to teaching and learning thereby ensuring that ITE attends to the complexity and breadth of critical global learning.
4. The recognition of the critical importance of providing opportunities for students to practice their critical global learning skills guided by expert support and feedback to support student engagement, motivation, and building students' critical global learning skillset.

The core learning outlined above is embedded in the two components of the conceptual framework, the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* outlined in Chapters Four and Nine, and the *Planning Tool* outlined in Chapter Seven, which I designed,

implemented and researched. Together, these outputs represent the most significant contribution this study makes to our understanding of teaching critical global learning within ITE. The model and the planning tool represent the structured approach to teaching and learning. They guided me to best support my students to become critical global learners during this study.

Firstly, the model evolved through a comprehensive literature review which identified where the fields of critical thinking and GE intersect. Creating the model was essential to ensure that my teaching was informed by relevant literature. It focused on identifying the key learning and outcomes for students along with the key considerations I needed to be aware of in my teaching. Incorporated into the key considerations outlined in the model is the recognition that all students are individuals and that their learning will be impacted by factors external to the classroom. I discovered a gap in the literature in relation to the interweaving of critical thinking, GE, and the context of ITE. Consequently, this model brings together literature from all three fields to present teacher educators with a comprehensive approach to understanding this overlap. The evolving model is designed to be flexible and adaptable as knowledge in this field develops. As a result, this model provides a starting point for other teacher educators to assess their practices and identify where their teaching approaches align with, or diverge from, the conceptualisation the model offers.

Secondly, the *Planning Tool* provides an approach to planning which ensures that each lesson attends to the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* elements, therefore ensuring that teaching is focused on the identified skills and dispositions students need to develop. The tool considers the conditions for learning that educators need to create and nurture, proposes four lesson elements to include in each lesson to ensure teaching is in line with the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, and promotes an awareness of the personal, professional and assessment outcomes for students. Crucially, the planning tool ensures that students have the opportunity to practice their critical global learning skills in each lesson with support from their teacher educator.

Together the model and the tool provide a new and unique conceptualisation of the nexus between critical thinking and GE and their application to ITE and form a conceptual framework. Conceptual frameworks connect theory with research, offer a scaffold to inform research design, and shape the presentation of research findings within a theoretical

context (Leshem and Trafford, 2007). The conceptual framework enhances our understanding of critical global learning by connecting theory in the fields of critical thinking and GE, highlighting their application to ITE, and providing a research-informed strategy to approach the teaching of critical global learning. As they developed and evolved, the model and the tool shaped and informed my research as I piloted and reviewed them. As constituent elements of the conceptual framework, the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and the *Planning Tool* provide a starting point and a lens for teacher educators to consider and develop their practice.

Additionally, there were two research aims identified for this project which were operationalised through the development and implementation of the elements of the conceptual framework:

1. *To ascertain the factors which contribute to student motivation, participation and achievement within critical global learning.*

I found that it was important to pay attention not just to what students were learning but how the learning took place. Within the *Planning Tool*, the inclusion of pre-conditions for learning ensured that I focused not just on what took place during lessons, but also attended to the learning experiences of students. Focusing on the pre-conditions for learning ensured that I was attentive to developing relationships with students, ensured that I paid attention to both the physical and psychosocial learning environments, and threaded a values-lens throughout my teaching. Attention to each of these supported students' engagement and learning by helping students to feel welcome in the classroom, I ensured I focused my teaching on being intentionally inviting while also transparent about the values I wanted to promote.

The structured nature of lessons which emerged from implementing the *Planning Tool* also supported students' motivation, participation and their development of critical global learning skills as it added a level of predictability to global education classes. This reflected Kyriacou's (2014) contention that when students are clear on the expectations of them, it raises their participation, engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, the structured approach allowed me to develop routines, such as the introductory reflection, which helped students to focus their learning. Finally, the structured approach supported

me personally. Using the *Planning Tool* to prepare lessons built my confidence in my teaching and ensured that I was consistently meeting the goals of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*.

2. *To identify the supports and barriers which impact on implementation of critical global learning.*

The supports and barriers I identified reflect factors impacting both students themselves and my own practice. The most significant support which impacted positively on my teaching of critical global learning was the opportunity to work collaboratively with Anna. Working with a colleague who was also a subject expert in GE and an experienced educator provided me with a sounding board to tease out ideas, concerns, and tensions. Working together, we were able to challenge each other and draw on our individual strengths to improve outcomes for all students. While I designed both the model and the tool, along with the majority of the lesson plans, Anna provided invaluable feedback which I incorporated regularly and which enhanced the development of the conceptual framework. Furthermore, as I had a close relationship with Anna, I was able to be honest and vulnerable about my concerns and fears. This level of honesty in our conversations allowed us to tease out difficult issues and helped me to progress my practice beyond what I believe I could have achieved alone. Another support which facilitated an improvement to my practices was committing to self-study action research. The methodological process of interrogating my practices and reaching out to students and critical friends for feedback altered my practice for the better, and supported me to develop the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and the *Planning Tool*. I believe that it is unlikely that I would have been able to commit the time and energy required to develop the elements of the conceptual framework without having formally committed to the self-study action research process.

External influences feature as one of the considerations for teaching within the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* which can both support or hinder students' learning. While the inclusion of external influences within the model is informed by literature, I also provided evidence throughout this thesis of where I experienced the impact that external influences were having on students' learning as I endeavoured to implement both the model and the tool within my teaching. Students' personal backgrounds acted as both

barriers and enablers in the classroom. For some students their life experiences, family or educational backgrounds prepared them to be pre-disposed to criticality and the values of GE. Whereas for other students, the same factors acted as barriers. Some students had succeeded educationally prior to attending higher education despite not employing criticality, or brought values from their social or family backgrounds which diverged from the values of GE. This made it more challenging for them to engage with the content and skills of critical global learning.

Working with a large cohort of students was also a barrier to students' critical global learning as it was not possible to form personal relationships with each of them, and to draw on knowledge of their background, or their strengths to scaffold their learning. Additionally, this informed the development of the *Planning Tool* which required flexibility in responding to a wide variety of student experiences and needs. Not only was the size of the student cohort a challenge, but so too was the socio-cultural makeup of the group. The limited cultural, religious, ethnic, or class diversity within the student cohort meant that students were typically drawing on very similar framings and experiences when contributing during classes. This meant that there was additional work to provide alternative perspectives that might have naturally emerged within a more diverse cohort.

11.3.1 The Contribution of this Thesis to the Field of Critical Global Learning in Ireland and Internationally

The findings from this research are presented within the context of my professional role as a member of the DICE Project for the entirety of my career in higher education. The DICE Project has been repeatedly commended for its contribution to progressing GE within formal education due to its long-standing involvement in ITE in Ireland. This research reflects my experiences as part of the DICE Project and builds on what I have learned about embedding GE into ITE as part of the project.

This research makes a significant, timely and valuable contribution to the field of critical global learning within ITE, with particular relevance to the Irish context, including:

- Addressing the shortfall of literature detailing evidence of research-informed successful teaching approaches within this area.

- Contributing to the cache of academic knowledge in this field through locating this study within a comprehensive and scholarly literature review and advancing the field through the development of a conceptual framework
- Presenting compelling evidence that it is possible for students to become critical global learners within a challenging context.
- Committing to use this knowledge to inform the development of practice and policy currently under way in Ireland
- Providing a roadmap to guide others to engage reflectively and proactively in this work.

While research within the nexus of the fields of GE and ITE is growing, to date there remains limited evidence of research-informed and tested successful teaching approaches. Indeed, within the introduction of the Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Education and Learning, Bourn (2020, p.5) highlights “the need for research and evidence to demonstrate its [global education and learning] effectiveness, importance and impact”. Fundamentally, this study provides evidence that despite the challenges of large group teaching, crowded timetables, and diversity within student awareness and backgrounds, it is possible to effectively support students to become critical global learners. Consequently, this study makes a valuable contribution to addressing this shortfall in literature and makes a substantial contribution to the enhancement of the body of academic knowledge in this field through the development of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and the *Planning Tool* which together form a conceptual framework.

I believe this conceptual framework will influence the direction and development of policy and practice in ITE in Ireland. This will be made possible through my involvement with ITE providers of GE across Ireland through the DICE Project. The findings from this research come at an opportune time given current policy changes in Ireland reflected in the incoming Céim standards for ITE, school curricula currently under review, and the recently launched Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education strategy. The findings offer a useable framework which teacher educators can apply to their own practice to support them in implementing these new Irish policies which, for the first time, call for the incorporation of GE into formal education. Furthermore, the outcomes from this research will be used to

inform consultation processes on the ongoing development and review of these emerging education policies in Ireland which incorporate GE.

Additionally, this thesis offers a structured roadmap for others who wish to reflect on their work within ITE. I have genuinely self-invested throughout this research through thorough and honest reflection in light of data from students and engagement with critical friends in order to enhance my practice which has led to personal and professional growth.

11.3.2 Limitations

There were a number of limitations which impacted on this study relating to contextual factors within my institution, student demographics, methodological and personal considerations.

As highlighted in responding to the second research aim, there were a variety of barriers which impacted on the implementation of the components of the conceptual framework in my teaching. The challenges and tensions outlined within my findings and discussion within Chapters Six, Eight and Ten were made more acute by limitations within my context. In particular, the cohort and group sizes that I worked with made it challenging to provide students with the level of support and feedback that I would have liked to deliver. This limitation meant that many students did not receive individualised feedback and that there were instances of poor criticality practice that went unnoticed and unchecked. This was particularly evident in the tension relating to students misinterpreting or oversimplifying issues and the potential knock-on impact for their own teaching practices in schools. Furthermore, the full timetables and heavy workload that students experience as part of their degree impacted on their critical global learning. Students' time and attention was divided between up to twelve different subject areas simultaneously which meant that they had limited time and space to dedicate to GE. As critical global learning is a process which requires reflection and a commitment to questioning, the limited time, mental space, and energy students had to dedicate to it impacted on the potential outcomes. Under different circumstances, with more time to devote to developing their critical global learning skills, outcomes for students could have been different.

Additionally, there were methodological limitations. As outlined in Chapter Five, a relatively small number of students engaged with focus groups which often consisted of friendship groups. Consequently, the data from focus groups represents only a small proportion of the student participants in this study which led to the need for the inclusion of surveys to counteract this limitation. Furthermore, although member checking took place with critical friends, it was not possible to engage in member checking with students who may have been able to offer clarifications or further insights. From a methodological standpoint, I have also been conscious of the generalisability of this study. This study is small scale and context bound, consequently some of my findings may not be representative of the wider field. Sullivan et al. (2016) posit that rather than generalisability of results, self-study action research projects should demonstrate that they have significance for others. Through developing the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and the *Planning Tool* which in combination offer a conceptual framework, I endeavoured to take my lived experience as a teacher educator within my context and offer new approaches within the field that can be of use in different contexts. However, conscious that knowledge is not finite and that contexts can vary and change, both the model and the tool have been designed to be flexible and adaptable to respond to evolving knowledge and contexts.

Finally, as outlined in Chapter One, I am aware that my own experiences as a student teacher, a classroom teacher and a beginning teacher educator influenced my approach to my practice. The biases I developed through my own experiences impacted on my expectations for students and my approach to teaching. Through engagement with self-study action research I have been enabled to identify where my past experiences were impacting on my teaching practices and used this awareness to mitigate against the impact of my personal biases on my practices as the action research cycles progressed. Patton (2002) suggests that within qualitative research, as the instrument of data collection and analysis is human, acknowledging, reflecting on and reporting sources of bias is crucial. Within this study, I worked continuously with critical friends to identify and challenge bias in my teaching. Working with critical friends with whom I could be vulnerable, open and honest was critical in allowing me to reflect on weaknesses in my practice. Ultimately, being able to do so supported me in improving my practices and developing approaches to lessen the impact of bias on my teaching practice.

11.4 Opportunities and Barriers presented by COVID-19

Although the COVID-19 global health pandemic did not directly impact on my research as data collection had finished prior to its arrival in Ireland, it does prompt considerations in relation to the topic of my research. There are three avenues for reflection that the pandemic poses in particular. These are connectivity, online teaching, and citizenship.

A commonly cited side effect of the pandemic has been that we have seen change happen quickly, where change seemed unimaginable before. One of these changes has been increased connectivity made possible by rapid advances in video conference technology. I have seen my students take part in online learning experiences with educators from around the world facilitated by volunteer-sending-agencies who could not undertake their usual activities. This has enabled students to learn directly from people with vastly different life experiences from their own and improve their awareness of others and their criticality as a result. Huish (2021) highlights that for many this particular change has transformed experiential learning from a focus on making memories to a focus on making meaning and deepening understanding. Furthermore, Ferris (2020), who provides CPD for educators on global citizenship, noted that when forced to pivot to online teaching, the feedback was very positive. Many educators expressed relief that they could access courses previously inaccessible to them due to the cost and time associated with the necessary travel to attend training courses (Ferris, 2020). She (ibid) noted this as an important lesson in how 'not to leave anyone behind'. This impact has also been visible in relation to sharing research and learning through academic conferences. I have taken part in four online conferences since March 2020, all of which would have previously required taking flights. From my own home I have learned from, and connected with educators from all over the world without the fatigue and carbon footprint normally associated with international conferences. It has made attending conferences more accessible and the sharing of information and innovative research easier. Increased connectivity both nationally, giving access to previously inaccessible training, and internationally with professionals around the world, has been a positive side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students and educators alike have accessed supports to increase their criticality skills, while research and innovation has been shared more easily and widely than pre-pandemic.

However, there have also been challenges. The move to online teaching has been difficult for many educators since March 2020. Gandhi (2020) captured the inherent challenge for educators in switching from face-to-face learning to an online format by highlighting elements missing in the online space. She (ibid, p.7) listed missing warm smiles, “unsaid-and-yet-understood glances and emotions between the learner and the teacher”, and the “fun, the fights, the debates”. Contrastingly, Ferris (2020) highlights that while the change in format has been difficult, the recorded videos and online resources created during the pandemic will have a long-term usefulness. While I have been aware of the mixed feelings in higher education in relation to online teaching, I have not experienced it myself as I have been on leave to complete the writing of this thesis. Consequently, I have not had the opportunity to consider adaptations for the *Planning Tool* in the context of online learning. The way in which I implemented the *Planning Tool* during cycle three relied heavily on taken-for-granted aspects of face-to-face teaching such as the physical environment, building relationships with students, and using interactive methodologies. However, I am certain that the underlying principles could be adapted for use in an online space.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic provides significant considerations for reflection in relation to citizenship. Donnelly (2020) implores us to consider what GE can contribute to discussions around COVID-19 and its impact on our lives. She (ibid, p.5) posits that we have an opportunity to reconsider new directions in addressing questions around “how we want to live together on (and with) this planet”. Indeed, the pandemic has brought issues of responsibility and service into sharp focus. Donnelly (2020) contends that the pandemic has supported many to realise that workers and public services are central to our lives and our survival, not billionaires or celebrities. Having lived through and been impacted by the pandemic provides a significant opportunity for classroom discussions in relation to citizenship and provides students with previously unavailable frames of reference when considering what it means to be a citizen in a globally interconnected world.

11.5 Recommendations

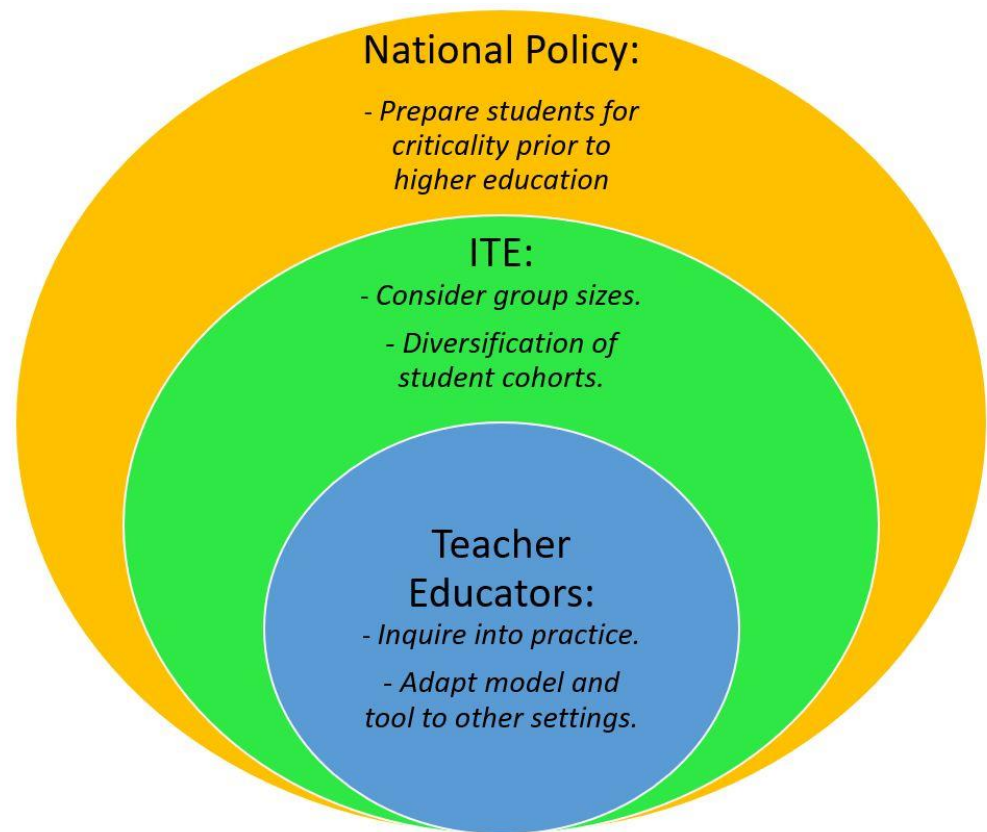


Figure 23: Thesis Recommendations

The evidence from this research study offers considerations for practice and policy for critical global learning. My recommendations originate from my findings and are represented in Figure 23, arranged within concentric circles. At the centre are a set of recommendations in relation to teacher educators, as my findings have the most direct application for this group. The next circle relates to ITE as my findings have applicability across the ITE sector. These recommendations specifically relate to ITE settings with similar student cohort profiles as my own. Finally, I make a recommendation in relation to Irish education policy.

My core recommendation for teacher educators is to incorporate self-study research into their practice. As a form of professional development, Samaras (2011) positions self-study as a lifelong process. The most significant outcome of this study has been a greater awareness of my practice and the factors that influence it. I developed my reflective and criticality skills and gained confidence in my ability to improve practice. I will continue to

use these skills throughout my career as a teacher educator. I will be able to build on the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*, and the *Planning Tool* developed in this study as my knowledge and context change and evolve. While I hope that the findings from my study provide useful insight for others to apply to their practice, it is in considering them in light of the challenges and opportunities within individual contexts that they will have the most impact for other practitioners. This leads to my second recommendation for teacher educators that they adapt the model and tool to fit their settings. Both are informed by current literature and reflect the findings from this study and so are firmly grounded in research. However, they were purposefully designed to be adaptable rather than prescriptive. While I have offered an insight into how I implemented them within my practice and the specific strategies and methodologies I used, these were in response to my context, skill and comfort levels. It would be of interest to investigate how they adapt for use in different contexts, such as different countries, different module descriptions, online learning, or with varying group sizes. Outcomes from further research may include additions or changes to the current configurations of the model and tool, which would strengthen and build our understanding of critical global learning within ITE.

Secondly, my recommendations for ITE relate to the contextual challenges I experienced. In settings where student numbers and a lack of diversity amongst the student cohort would pose challenges to developing critical global learning skills, I recommend addressing these issues. Group sizes significantly impact the potential outcomes of critical global learning. Within this study, my ability to support students' development of critical global learning skills was repeatedly compromised by the large group sizes I worked with. Groups of sixty students led to crowded classrooms and reduced my ability to provide individual feedback or responses to students. While I worked within these restrictions to lessen the impact on students, their learning remained compromised. While many subject areas also work with groups of sixty within my institution, others are viewed as more practical and comprise groups of thirty. It is my recommendation that any subject area, such as GE, which focuses on developing students' critical thinking skills through interactive debates and discussions, should also work with groups no larger than thirty. This would allow greater engagement between students and a higher level of interaction for all students with their teacher educators. Furthermore, working with smaller group numbers would lessen the possibility of students misinterpreting or oversimplifying complex justice issues.

Additionally, student learning was compromised by the limited socio-economic, religious, or cultural diversity evident within the student cohort. Therefore, I recommend that ITE institutions with similar challenges consciously diversify their student cohorts. Some individual institutions have developed initiatives to address this challenge by adapting their marketing materials and developing access routes for specific cohorts who are underrepresented in ITE. I support these efforts and recommend that they are implemented more widely across institutions and continue to be accompanied by research that uncovers and addresses the root causes of the lack of diversity within ITE in Ireland.

My final recommendation is concerned with the educational approach pupils encounter in Ireland prior to entering higher education. The findings from this thesis repeatedly revealed the challenges students experienced when transitioning from second-level education to higher education. Students consistently indicated that the focus on high stakes testing in their secondary education led to an emphasis on rote learning, which discouraged criticality. This was challenging for students when entering higher education which promoted independent and critical thinking. This challenge is not unique to the participants in this study, but is reflected in research studies that found the LCP to be heavily reliant on memory recall (Burns et al., 2018). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LCP in Ireland was altered for 2020 and 2021, with an indication that these alterations will continue in 2022. I propose that we have a unique opportunity to use this time to envisage alternative approaches to assessment and entry into higher education which moves away from a reliance on rote learning and instead fosters criticality and independent thinking in learners. Changes such as this would have a significant impact on higher education. Students would enter higher education with a more robust baseline in criticality than they do currently, and consequently the potential learning outcomes could be much higher for students when the focus is not on developing criticality but on building on existing skills.

11.6 Conclusion

This research study focused on the lessons from a self-study action research project undertaken within ITE in Ireland. In describing action research, Susman and Evered (1978, p.586) posit that “the act itself is presented as the means of both changing the system and generating critical knowledge about it”. This was the case for this study. Engaging in

action research enabled me to change my practice and approach to teaching critical global learning and, in doing so, contribute to the knowledge base in this area.

In an effort to share the lessons from my research, I want to reflect on what I know now as a teacher educator that I did not prior to undertaking this study. Fundamentally, my practice as a teacher educator has been irrevocably changed for the better. I cannot unlearn the reflection and criticality skills I developed through this process. I cannot ignore the insights and knowledge I have gained about critical global learning and its interaction with my context. In striving to navigate challenges and tensions which emerged in my practice, I learned to turn to and trust multiple sources of knowledge, including literature, my students, critical friends, colleagues, and my knowledge and reflections.

Furthermore, as a result of this research study, we now have empirical evidence of an approach to teaching critical global learning that supports students in developing relevant skills. Additionally, this research study offers a new conceptualisation of critical global learning in the context of considerations for teaching in the form of the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning* and a structured approach to its implementation through the *Planning Tool*. In light of current changes happening in Ireland under the new Céim Standards for ITE, the findings from this study have relevance in navigating approaches to implementing GCE as a new core element of ITE. The findings from this study demonstrate the transformation in students' knowledge and skills that are possible in this area and offers an approach to conceptualising how to approach the teaching of this area in an interactive, engaging and critical way.

To conclude, I would like to return to the words of the students who contributed so much to this study and whose insights, honesty and generosity taught me so much. Although I experienced challenges and am aware that not all students experienced the same positive outcomes, many students experienced a significant change in mindset and skills. Just as I have been motivated by them to become a better teacher educator, my students were often motivated to improve their skills due to a desire to also become better classroom teachers, as highlighted by the student who stated: "*I am doing my best to learn more so that I can pass on good information/ habits/ decision making to children I teach*" (CIGAMSCS). In sharing the most important approach which supported them to develop their critical global learning skills, a student stated that "*you need real life experience of critical thinking*

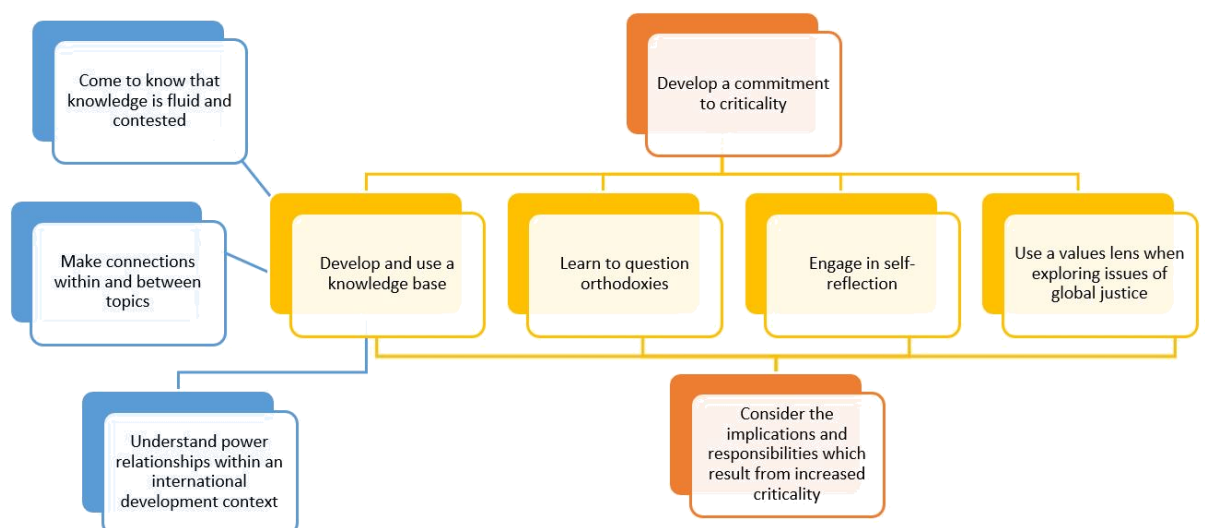
before you can just sit down and do it” (C3GDFG2) and in doing so reminds all teacher educators to ensure we provide these crucial opportunities for students in our classrooms.

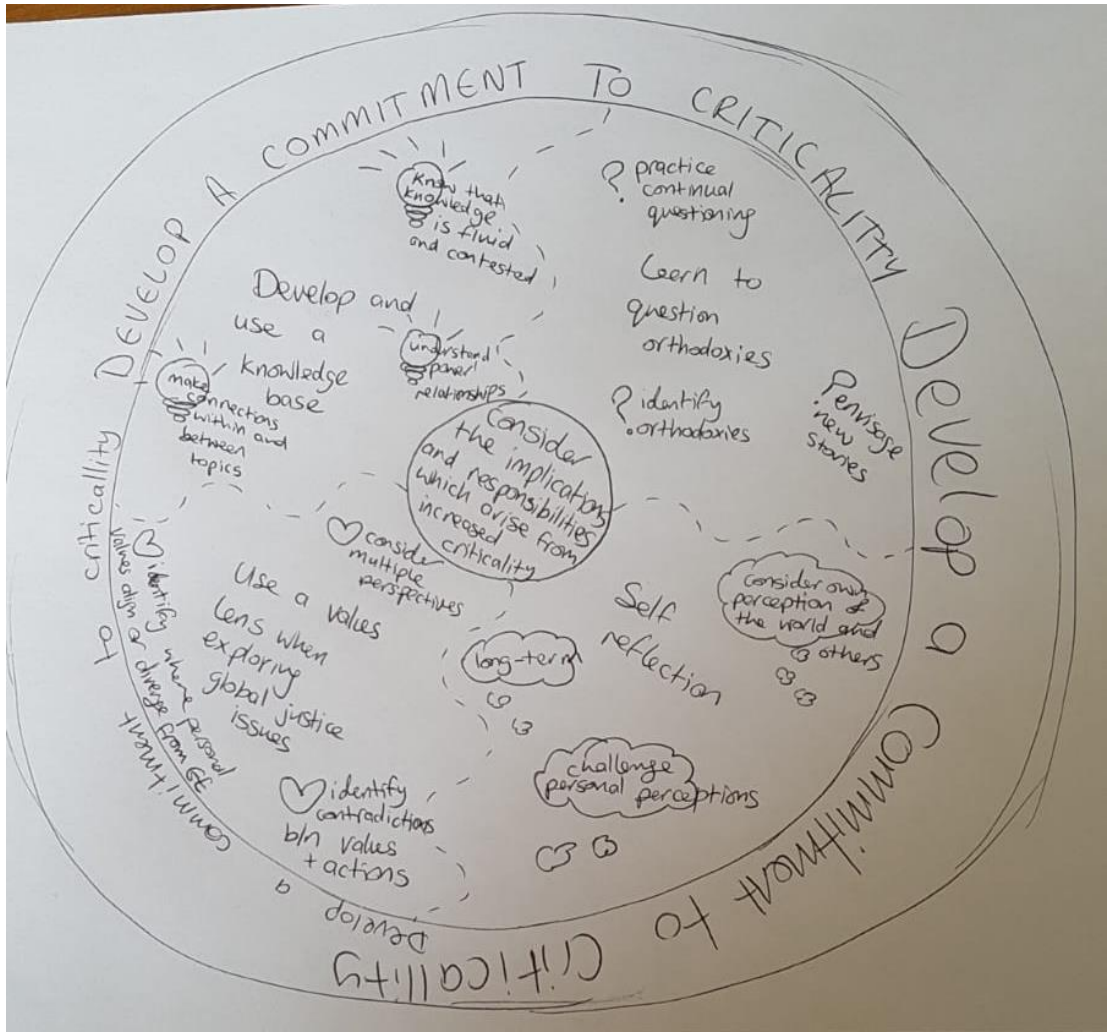
12 Appendices

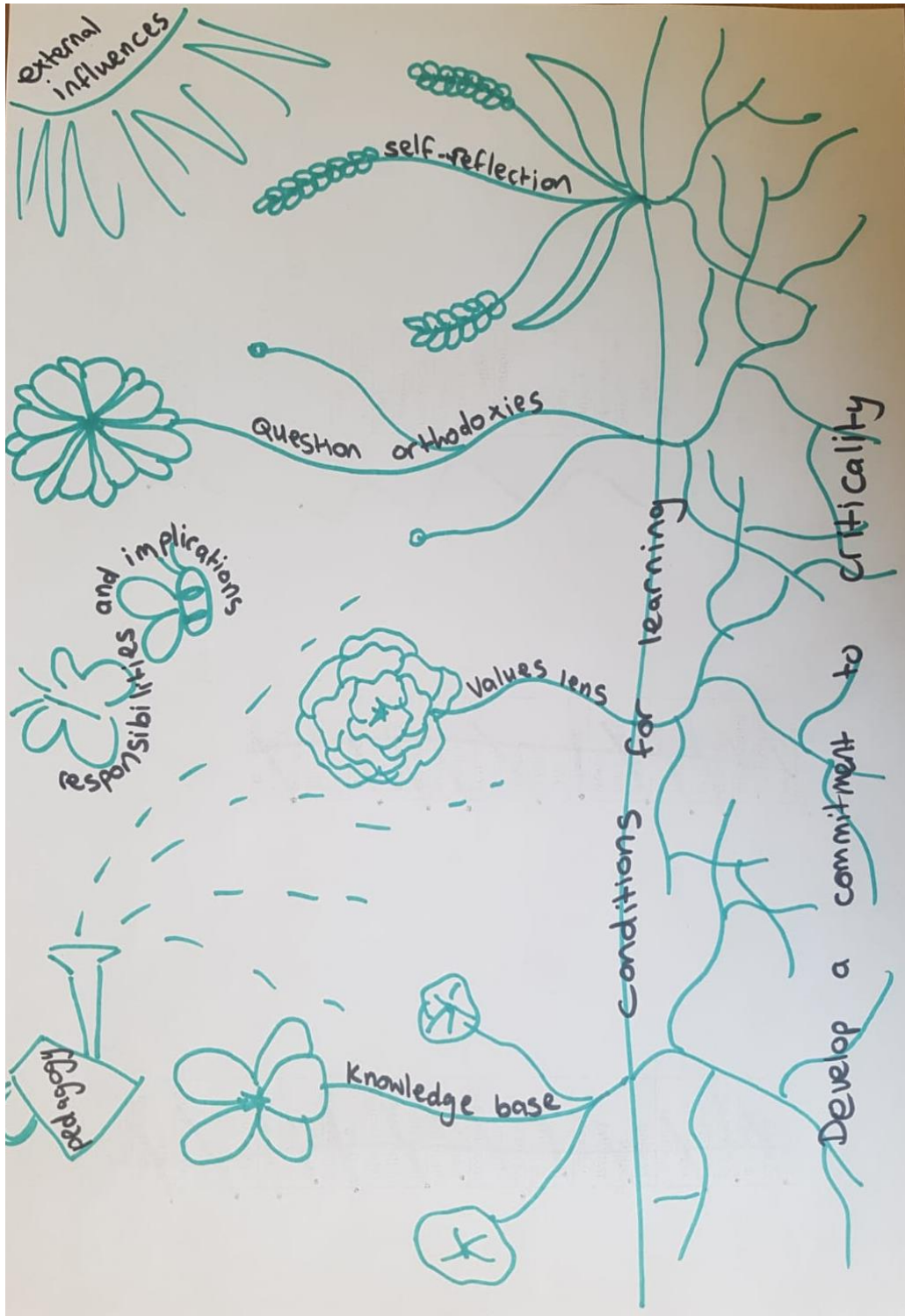
Appendix A: Evolution of the model

1. Making connections within and between systems particularly in terms of social, economic and environmental dimensions,
2. Awareness that many terms such as sustainability are contested,
3. The need to respond to complexity and change,
4. Understanding the significance of power relations,
5. The importance of self-reflection,
6. The promotion of values-based literacy.

1. Make connections within and between systems and topics;
2. Reflect on contested topics and develop personal understandings of same;
3. Respond to evolving complexity and change;
4. Understand the significance of power relations within an international development context;
5. Develop and employ a knowledge base when engaging in critical thinking;
6. Question orthodoxies;
7. Engage in self-reflection;
8. Use a values-based lens when exploring issues of global justice;
9. Demonstrate a commitment to asking critical questions;







PhD problem reflection

Made with serendipity

BRIGHID SEP 26, 2018 09:25AM

Problem 1

I underestimate students ability to think critically

I make presumptions about students experiences, knowledge and attitudes being very conservative

Why is it a problem?

This means that I don't push them as much as I could and that I am easily pleased with their work rather than believing they have a greater potential.

This was seen in 'if the world were a village...' where I didn't push them to think about or answer the 'why' questions and was pleased they were giving guesses at all.

It means that I don't develop activities as much as I could and have a tendency to spend short amounts of time on what could be very useful activities such as ranking activities and therefor too much time on me talking.

What can I do about it?

I can keep questioning and reflecting and discussing this with my critical friends.

I can plan time for activities and consciously ensure student voice is heard more often rather than my own

Problem 2

Students are often assessment oriented and can be slow to value learning in itself.

Why is it a problem?

When they realise a module is more focused on intrinsic learning and personal development they can begin to disengage

Students can focus on how to do an assignment rather than how to develop their own values and thoughts

Attendance drops off

What can I do about it?

I could ask them to write a definition each week at the end of class - would need significant time.

I could change assignment to require one definition from each week - 12 definitions - would word count allow?

In semester 2 - I could like each session to the curriculum and lesson plans for placement.

Be more active during tasks - rather than just taking attendance, ask questions and engage with students during tasks

Problem 3

I can make assumptions about activities being self-explanatory and simple

sometimes I give clear instructions (in my view) and many students know what to do but there are always a few who have no idea what to do. Sometimes I provide examples and written instructions and students don't use them and then continue to struggle with or don't engage with a task

T

Why is it a problem?

Students can disengage with task - meaning they disengage overall with the module, they write it off, or they simply disengage with the task and do not access the learning in it.

Students do the task incorrectly

some students understand the task and have no problem, other students need scaffolding - differentiation needed

What can I do about it?

Build in time to check in more actively - always check for understanding by asking what they will do, always get feedback in a structured way after a task and have time to clarify any mistakes or misinterpretations

differentiate - ensure students have access to full clear instructions during task

Problem 4

Sometimes you are too tired to do your best job as a teacher - teaching is 90% performance and how I am feeling can effect how I perform.

Why is it a problem?

This is a problem because the quality of my teaching is diminished on days I am tired or unwell.

This effects my ability to react on the spot and to draw out learning from students

Students have indicated in round one of data the importance of lecturing style/approach/relationship and if this is suffering, then it will impact everything else.

What can I do about it?

More structured sessions and activities that would work regardless of energy levels and rely on student participation more than lecturer voice would be helpful

Problem 5

There is a tendency for me to put too much information into lectures and have them too content heavy.

I get concerned that I am not telling them enough fact based information and transferring enough knowledge.

Why is it a problem?

Students get easily overwhelmed and then begin to switch off and take in less information.

Students can miss the main points when trying to follow too much information.

Students are unlikely to do additional reading if their interest has not been sparked in class - they are not left wanting to know more, they are left confused, overwhelmed and like they know too much! (speculation, conversations, observation)

What can I do about it?

I can design discovery learning activities to transfer knowledge in a more active way.

dice discussions, discovery question dice, discussion cards, ranking activities, matching activities

I can reduce volume of content and focus on simple key messages and where to go to find out or do more.

I can give weekly tasks or focus more on independent research outside of class and active engagement in class time

Problem 6

When working with third level students, attendance is (somewhat) unpredictable

Why is this a problem?

During weeks when there are events happening, students tend to drop off in their attendance. I had five students in one group this week!

Students can miss really critical information and learning.

What can I do about it?

I can look ahead at the semester and identify: graduation week, bank holiday weeks, rag week, christmas day week etc. and note which weeks will be likely to have poor attendance.

I can prepare additional online materials or online tasks for weeks when attendance is likely to be low.

I can structure the module so really critical sessions (like this weeks charity vs justice) are not happening on a week when there is likely to be low attendance.

Problem 7

There are too many students and the same activity does not work for everyone

myself and vicky have many examples of activities working very differently with the different groups, also, different students within groups have given very different feedback on activities, socratic questioning session in particular

There is too wide a gap between students knowledge, abilities, backgrounds, criticality, enthusiasm, capacities.

Some students are extremely bright, switched on and critical (they are usually bored or disappointed with how far my lectures push), they are usually a minority. Some students grow a lot and learn a lot in the module and come to value it (they can often mis-hear or mis-interpret messages and end up just wanting to 'help' the world). More students come across as not very bright, they do not engage, do not make an effort and completely misinterpret messages and fail to see bigger picture.

Why is this a problem?

My job is to teach all students not just a select few. The ones for whom it is not working are often the most critical. GE works for students who would already be inclined towards it and can be a struggle in big groups for students for whom it challenges their belief system.

All students need to receive the same teaching for equity and time saving but not all students respond in the same way to all activities

what can I do about it?

I don't know!

Problem 8

I am insecure, somewhat introverted and can struggle to have conversations with students.

During class I talk to all students but usually just to take attendance rather than actually asking them about the activity or supporting them to deepen their engagement.

Why is this a problem?

Students learning is greatly enhanced by interaction, conversation, discussion and debate.

Some students get engagement from me and others do not so they can have very different experiences of an activity or session.

It makes it hard for me to gauge where students understanding, engagement and values are during a session and so my teaching is not responsive but prescriptive.

What can I do about it?

Ask more questions

Engage more in conversations

ensure all activities require feedback time where I can question and pick up on issues

Problem 9

I can assume too much of the subtleties/complexities of global issues are a given. I can presume too often that students fundamentally share liberal view points with me.

Why is this a problem?

When I make this assumption, I don't leave as much time as necessary for students to air their voices and opinions and highlight their differing views from mine.

Students can hold racist/sexist/homophobic etc. views without me ever knowing or finding out too late or in a form I can do nothing about.

Be careful not to present issues as too one sided or definitive.

Ask for and respond to student opinions and view points.

What can I do about it?

Provide more space for student voice.

Appendix C: Original schedule of planned focus groups

Originally, five focus groups would take place during each action research cycle, each around a specific theme.

Theme 1: Personal understanding of critical thinking.

Theme 2: Linking critical thinking with global justice.

Theme 3: Reflecting on contested terminology presented in the module.

Theme 4: Implications for you personally and professionally now that you have engaged with global education and developed your critical thinking.

Theme 5: personal reflections and feedback on lectures and tutorials; suggestions for improvements to the module including methodologies, activities, sequencing, topics etc

Appendix D: Interview guides for focus groups in each cycle

Cycle 1, Focus Group 1:

1. What does critical thinking mean to you?
2. Can you think of examples where you were a critical thinker?
3. Do you think it is important for teachers to be critical thinkers? Why? Why not?
4. Are you encouraged to be critical thinkers as teachers?

Cycle 1, Focus Group 2:

Students were asked to collectively brainstorm their understanding of the following topics: sustainability, global citizenship, development, human rights

1. How has your understanding of these topics changed over the course of the module?
2. Do you think it is important to be aware of language?
3. Do you think all people have the same interpretation of these issues?
 - is it important to have a consensus? Why? Why not?
 - what causes people to have different interpretations of the same topic?
4. Did you find any of the conceptualisations of these topics offered in the module to be challenging?
 - in what way?
 - how did you react?

Cycle 1, Focus Group 3:

1. what responsibilities does this knowledge come with?
2. How will this module effect your future teaching? Your personal life?
3. Suggestions for improvements to methodologies, sequencing, activities, topics.
4. Suggestions for how to split the module in two.
5. What worked well and should be kept going forward?

Cycle 2, Focus Group 1 (same questions used for both groups):

1. What does critical thinking mean to you?
2. Can you think of examples where you were a critical thinker?
3. Do you think it is important for teachers to be critical thinkers? Why? Why not?
4. Are you encouraged to be critical thinkers as teachers?

Cycle 2, Focus Group 2 (same questions used for both groups):

1. Understanding of various issues months later – climate change, sustainability, development, power, justice. - do you know of any solutions to any of these issues mentioned?
2. What worked well?
3. What could be done differently or improved upon?
4. What helped you to develop critical thinking skills? What didn't help?
5. Do you find yourself questioning things more as a result of this module? Can you give examples?
6. Do you feel any sense of responsibility having covered the two modules? - are there any responsibilities inherent in learning about global education?
7. Do you think you will include any of the learning in your teaching on school placement?
8. Do you think all students in 2nd year understood/appreciated global education? Why or why not? (what barriers might exist for some students in engaging with global education or developing critical thinking skills?)
9. What do lecturers (generally or including me) do that helps you to learn and develop critical thinking skills?
10. What do lecturers (generally or including me) do that hinders your learning?

Cycle 3, Focus Group 1 (same questions used for both groups):

1. What does critical thinking mean to you?
2. Can you think of examples where you were a critical thinker?
3. Do you think it is important for teachers to be critical thinkers? Why? Why not?
4. Are you encouraged to be critical thinkers as teachers?

Cycle 3, Focus Group 2 (same questions used for both groups):

1. What is critical thinking?
 - What does it look like?/ what are the 'elements' of it?
 - How do you do it?
2. Do you feel like a critical thinker?
 - Examples of you being a critical thinker?
 - Examples from your life generally
 - Examples from the module
3. Did the module help you to develop your critical thinking?
 - How?
 - How could it improve to better support?
4. What key messages are you taking away from the module?
5. Can you see a connection between critical thinking and exploring global issues?
6. Do you prefer to be active (answering questions, jigsaw approach etc.) or to listen and take notes?
7. What does a lecturer do that supports you to want to participate, be active and explore difficult issues?
8. What does a lecturer do that makes you disengage?
9. Any other comments or questions about the module, global education or critical thinking?

Appendix E: Consent form template



College of Social
Sciences

Student Consent Form

Title of Project: An action research project exploring the development of critical thinking about global issues among student teachers within a development education module.

Name of Researcher: Brigid Golden

Name of Supervisors: Prof. Michele Schweisfurth and Dr. Ria Dunkley

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- I consent to any focus group interviews I am involved in being audio-recorded.
- I consent to in-class activities being voice recorded and I acknowledge that these recordings will never be shared with a third party.
- I consent to the collection of data on in-class tasks including collecting completed tasks or task sheets.
- I understand that my assignment will be graded by a third party for summative purposes and I consent to the use of my assignment for analysis purposes for this study.

- I consent to the use of any Most Significant Change Story I submit being used for research purposes.
- I acknowledge that group anonymity cannot be assured due to the nature of the group in question.
- I understand that all names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised in any shared or published documents.
- I understand that the material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times and that it will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research
- I understand that the material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
- I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

- I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades or professional relationship with my lecturer arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

I agree to take part in this research study

I do not agree to take part in this research study

Name of Participant

.....

Signature

Date

Critical Friend Consent Form

Title of Project: An action research project exploring the development of critical thinking about global issues among student teachers within a development education module.

Name of Researcher: Brigid Golden

Name of Supervisors: Prof. Michele Schweisfurth and Dr. Alan Britton

Please tick the boxes to acknowledge your agreement with the below statements. If you are not in agreement with any of the statements, please leave the box beside it blank.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

- I consent to interviews I am involved in being audio-recorded.

- I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.

-

- I acknowledge that individual participants will be referred to by pseudonym in any published or shared documents.
- I acknowledge that all names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised in any shared or published documents.
- I understand that the material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times and that the material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research
- I understand that the material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
- I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

I agree to take part in this research study

I do not agree to take part in this research study

Name of Participant

.....

Signature

Date

Appendix F: Survey templates for each cycle

Cycle 1

EDU204: Social Studies 2 – The Global Teacher

End of Semester Review

1. I have enjoyed learning about development education this semester

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

2. As a result of development education I have more awareness of global issues such as sustainability, equality, trade and human rights.

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

3. As a result of development education I of more interest in global issues such as sustainability, equality, trade and human rights.

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

4. As a result of development education I have found that I am more likely to question things people say or things that I read rather than accepting them straight away.

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

5. As a result of development education I have found that I am more careful about the things that I say and language that I use.

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

6. how likely do you think you are to engage with development education in the future [for example, by teaching development education teams on school placement\ when you graduate or opting for related electives]?

Very likely Likely Unsure Unlikely Very unlikely

7. What methodologies helped you to develop critical thinking skills (tick all that apply)

| | |
|---|--|
| Ranking activities | |
| If the world were a village of 100 people | |
| Dice discussion | |
| Methodology bingo | |
| Sharing answers on padlet | |
| Activities with photographs | |
| Biscuit game | |
| Trading Game | |
| Socratic questions | |
| Walking debate | |
| Web of life | |
| Other [please name] | |

Please expand on one of these methodologies that you found helpful. In what ways did the methodology help you to develop your critical thinking skills?

9. Can you think of how the delivery of any of the methodology's mentioned above could be improved? Were there any you did not understand, would not be comfortable using in the classroom or that did not help you to develop values and attitudes and improve critical thinking?

10. Please define the following terms:

sustainability:

global citizenship:

development:

human rights:

justice:

power relationships [in terms of development education]:

11. Can you see connections between your life and the lives of people around the world? Please explain your answer.
12. Can you see connections between the different concepts explored in the module? [for example: trade, gender, sustainability, controversial issues, development, human rights, inequality, food distribution, methodology, poverty, justice]. Please explain your answer.
13. What worked well in the module which you think should continue? [in terms of delivery, concepts covered, time spent on various areas]
14. what didn't work and should be changed? [in terms of delivery, concepts covered, time spent on various areas]
15. did you attend an additional event? If so, which one, and was it useful to you?
16. Do you think this development education course is adequately engaging for all students? Explain your answer.
17. The module will be split in two next year, do you have any suggestions as to the best way to do this, what should be included in semester one and then in semester two?

Cycle 2, semester 1 (this survey also included the template for most significant change stories, appendix G)

Global Education end of semester review – Autumn 2018

I have enjoyed learning about global education

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

As a result of global education lectures, I have more awareness than I previously had of global issues

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

I have found that I am more likely to question things I hear as a result of global education lectures

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

I have found that I am more careful about the language I use as a result of global education lectures

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

What methodologies helped you to develop critical thinking during this module (tick all that apply)

| | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Ranking activities | If the world were a village of 100 people | Dice discussion |
| Reflections at the start of sessions | Socratic questioning | Online materials and discussion forum |
| Migration activity around granting asylum | Jigsaw approach | Concept map |

Please expand on one methodology and how it was helpful:

Do you have any suggestions for how the above methodologies could be improved, or what additional methodologies could be used to help develop critical thinking:

As a result of global education lectures, can you see ways in which your life is connected with the lives of people around the world? Please explain your answer:

What worked well overall in global education lectures?

What didn't work well, and how could it be improved in future?

I am likely to include global education throughout my teaching career

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

I found the division between information in semester 1 and teaching tips in semester 2 effective

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

Comments (about any of the above questions):

What methodologies helped you to develop critical thinking during this module (tick all that apply)

Trading Game

Biscuit Game

DeBonos Thinking Hats

Reflections at the start of sessions

Methodologies for using photographs

Exploring controversial issues

Please expand on one methodology and how it was helpful:

Do you have any suggestions for how the methodologies could be improved, or what additional methodologies could be used to help develop critical thinking:

What was the take home message(s) from global education throughout 2nd year for you?

What were the main global education issues that stood out for you this year? Can you name any solutions to them or ways that we can impact on them?

What worked well overall in global education lectures?

What didn't work well, and how could it be improved in future?

Did you find any aspect of global education challenging? (this could mean difficult to understand or challenging to your own views and experiences) yes no

Please explain:

Looking at the photograph on the board, can you identify both similarities and differences between that child and the children you will teach in Irish classrooms:

similarities:

differences:

Any final comments or questions about global education?

Cycle 3 (this survey also included the template for most significant change stories, appendix G)

Global Education end of semester review – Autumn 2019

What group are you in? ___ Are you a mature student? ___ Are you an Erasmus student? _____

Please give an example of a time when you were a critical thinker:

I have enjoyed learning about global education

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

As a result of global education lectures, I have more awareness than I previously had of global issues

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

I have found that I am more likely to question things I hear as a result of global education lectures

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

I have found that I am more careful about the language I use as a result of global education lectures

Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

What methodologies helped you to develop critical thinking during this module (tick all that apply)

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Ranking activities | If the world were a village of 100 people | Walking debate |
| Reflections at the start of sessions | Post it notes and whiteboards for feedback | Online materials and discussion forum |
| Migration activity around granting asylum (online) | Jigsaw approach | Concept map |

Please expand on one methodology and how it was helpful:

Do you have any suggestions for how the above methodologies could be improved, or what additional methodologies could be used to help develop critical thinking:

Do you feel the following approaches were visible in global education lectures (please tick those that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Content focus | 2. Opportunities to speak in small groups |
| 3. Making links with your own life | 4. Having to feedback ideas to the whole groups |

Did these elements support or hinder your engagement with critical thinking during class?
Please explain

As a result of global education lectures, can you see ways in which your life is connected with the lives of people around the world? Yes No Please explain your answer:

What were the take home messages from global education this semester for you?

What were the main global education issues that stood out for you this semester? Can you name any **solutions** to them or ways that we can impact on them?

What worked well overall in global education lectures?

What didn't work well, and how could it be improved in future?

Did you find any aspect of global education challenging? (this could mean difficult to understand or challenging to your own views and experiences) yes

no

Please explain:

Which module objectives did you feel were met (if you feel that more than one objective was met, please rank them with 1=objective met most strongly, 9=objective least met in module).

| | |
|--|---|
| | Engage with complex global issues such as climate change and migration; |
| | Critically examine your own values, attitudes, assumptions and biases; |
| | Appreciate the similarities between peoples everywhere, and learn to value diversity; |
| | Understand the global context of your local lives by exploring interdependence and the ways in which your life is linked with those of people throughout the world; |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Imagine different futures and the role you can play in creating a fairer and more sustainable world in which power and resources are more equitably shared; |
| | Develop skills which will support you to participate meaningfully in society such as: critical thinking, identifying solutions to complex problems, communication or linking knowledge with action; |
| | Understand some of the economic, cultural, political and environmental influences which shape our lives; |
| | Develop your commitment to values of equality and justice; |
| | Develop an awareness of the unequal distribution of resources internationally and come to an understanding of relationships internationally; |

Any final comments or questions about global education?

Appendix G: Most significant change stories template

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Type of significant change (tick those that apply to you in terms of significant changes you have noticed in yourself as a result of this module) | Increased ability to question things | |
| | Seeing connections between global issues or systems I didn't see before | |
| | Change in the language I use | |
| | Increased participation in debated about global issues | |
| | Increased interest in global issues | |
| | Engagement in social action | |
| | I am more aware of my own opinions and values | |
| | I have begun encouraging others to engage in global issues | |
| | I have become disengaged from global issues | |
| | I avoid discussion or debate on global issues | |
| | | |
| When did you notice this change? | | |
| What led to the change? | | |
| Why do you think this is a significant change? | | |
| What difference has it already made or will it make into the future for you? | | |



University
of Glasgow

College of Social
Sciences

Participant Information Sheet - Students

Researcher: Brigid Golden, B.Ed., M.Ed.

Project Title: An action research project exploring the development of critical thinking about global issues among student teachers within a development education module.

You are being invited to take part in the above research study.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Brigid

Introduction

This research project proposes to examine the impact of initial teacher education on student teachers' ability to think critically about global issues through the examination of the module: Social Studies 2: The Global Teacher. The aim of the research is to better understand how student teachers develop critical thinking and to improve the support they receive in this area. Through involvement in this research you will be given the opportunity to engage

with the topic on a deeper level through discussions in interviews and a heightened awareness of critical thinking about global issues during data collection.

What is involved in participating?

You are being invited to take part in this research project during the normal course of your studies. All B.Ed.2 groups will receive the same teaching and engage in the same activities throughout the module, however data collection will take place only with Group One.

There will be multiple forms of data collection involved in this study such as focus group interviews, collection of data from in-class tasks, and examination of assignments.

Focus Group Interviews:

You will be invited to take part in focus group interviews in groups of between five and eight students. As with all elements of the research project, participation is voluntary and you will not be penalised in any way for lack of participation in the project. Interviews will last between 30 and 45 minutes and will take place on campus at times which are convenient to you. Five focus group interviews will take place, each one on a distinct theme. You may choose to volunteer to take part in one, multiple or none of the interviews depending on your interest levels. Interview themes will include: Personal understandings and experiences of critical thinking and global issues; understanding of topics and language used in the module; implications inherent in development education; most significant change stories and how to improve the module.

In-class activities:

You will be invited to contribute to data collection during relevant in-class tasks. At the beginning of each session, I will inform you if there are relevant activities within that session for data collection. During debates, discussions or ranking activities selected small groups who have all given consent to take part in this data collection method will have an audio recording device on their table to capture their interactions. During activities where task sheets are used, you will be invited to submit your task sheet to me if you are comfortable with it being used as data. The voice recordings and task sheets will be used for analysis purposes only and will not be shared with any third party in their entirety. If you are uncomfortable taking part in this method, you may refrain from involvement in data collection without any consequence to your learning.

Examination of assignments:

All assignments will all be submitted anonymously using student ID numbers rather than names to remove any potential bias in the correction process. Assignments for Group One will be graded for summative purposes by a third party who is not involved in the research project. Students who wish to submit their assignments as part of the research project for

data analysis will then be invited to do so using the private online repository, assignments submitted in this manner will be done so anonymously.

Most Significant Change Stories:

You will be invited to submit a ‘most significant change story’ at two points during the module, half way through and then at the end. Most significant change stories are short reflections on what you believe to be the most significant change you experienced from this module. A template will be provided for these stories. These Stories, without identifying the authors will also be used during focus group interviews for discussion.

Benefits and Risks:

There may not be any direct benefit to participants as a result of taking part in this research project although I hope you will enjoy the experience. The primary benefit will be for the future students who will undertake this module, and for me as a lecturer, so that I can improve my teaching. I plan to adapt my teaching in response to data collected. However, participants may encounter an increased awareness of and engagement with critical thinking, a key element of the Irish education system.

Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions and without giving any reason. Students can be assured that withdrawal from the study will not affect either the quality of the teaching they receive nor their grades. Should students wish to withdraw from an interview, they may simply state this on the recording with no repercussions. Should students wish to withdraw from the in class based data collection, they will be invited to attend lectures with an alternative group where they will receive the same teaching but without the recording of data, this will be offered without prejudice to the teaching they will receive, to their grade, to their relationship with their lecturer or to their studies as a whole –and you will not be required to provide a reason.

In the event that a student wishes to exit the research project, they will be afforded the choice as to the use of the data you have contributed a– you may wish to strike existing data or you may wish to allow me to use the data. This choice will be entirely that of the participant and the researcher will not engage in any persuasion tactics in this regard.

Ethical use of data:

Please note that group confidentiality may not be guaranteed due to the limited size of the participant sample. It will not be possible to keep the confidentiality of the group identity. Due to the nature of Group One being the only group in each year group which includes both mature students and non-mature students, it will not be possible to maintain anonymity of the group identity. Details such as the location, name of course, year and individual group will be declared in the final thesis meaning that it would be possible to ascertain the names of people within the group. However, every effort will be made to ensure individual anonymity through the use of pseudonyms and codes.

Individual anonymity will be kept through the use of pseudonyms in all published or shared documents. The researcher will be the only person with access to the key which matches identifiers to their pseudonyms.

Additionally, please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it possible. In the unlikely event that during our conversation I hear anything which makes me worried that someone might be in danger of harm, I might have to inform relevant agencies of this.

How will the data be used?

Following analysis of all data collected, participants will be invited to provide feedback on their perception of the accuracy of the findings or interpretations offered. Ultimately, findings from the data will be presented within a PhD thesis and published in both journal articles and conference papers.

Electronic data will be password protected and physical data will be stored in a locked facility within the researcher's private office, only the researcher and a professional transcriber will have access to the data. The data will be retained for ten years in accordance with University of Glasgow guidelines.

This project has been considered and approved by the University of Glasgow Research Ethics Committee.

Contact details:

If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study my contact details are as follows:

Brigid Golden, Brigid.golden@mic.ul.ie , 061-204991.

If you have concerns about this study and wish to file a complaint with someone independent please contact: The College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow Ethics Officer, Dr. Muir Houston, email: muir.houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Participant Information Sheet – Critical Friend

Researcher: Brighid Golden, B.Ed., M.Ed.

Project Title: An action research project exploring the development of critical thinking about global issues among student teachers within a development education module.

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Brighid

Introduction

This research project proposes to examine the impact of ITE on student teachers' ability to think critically about global issues through the examination of the module: Social Studies 2: The Global Teacher. The aim of the research is to better understand how student teachers develop critical thinking and to improve the support they receive in this area. Through involvement in this research you will be given the opportunity to engage with the topic on a deeper level through discussions in interviews and a heightened awareness of critical thinking about global issues during data collection.

What is involved in participating?

You are being invited to take part in this research project which is taking place within the module Social Studies 2: The Global Teacher with second year B.Ed. students. As part of the peer observation sessions we engage in, I am inviting you to contribute to the data collection for this research project. With your consent I would like to record our conversation following the peer observation session you undertake in my classroom. As standard, I will

provide you with a list of items I wish you to look for in the session, these will be oriented towards the focus of this research project.

All B.Ed.2 groups will receive the same teaching and engage in the same activities throughout the module, however data collection will take place only with Group One. In addition to our peer observation session data will also be collected in conjunction with students. Students are being asked to engage with multiple forms of data collection involved in this study such as focus group interviews, collection of data from in-class tasks, and examination of assignments. In addition to this I will be keeping a reflective diary on my own observations from teaching the module.

Benefits and Risks:

There may not be any direct benefit to you as a result of taking part in this research project although I hope you will enjoy the experience. The primary benefit will be for my future students as I will be able to adapt my teaching in response to data collected. However, you may encounter an increased awareness of and engagement with critical thinking, a key element of the Irish education system.

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions. Should you wish to withdraw from an interview, you may simply state this on the recording with no repercussions.

Ethical use of data:

Please note that every effort will be made to ensure your anonymity through the use of pseudonyms and codes in all publications and shared documents in relation to this study.

Additionally, please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it possible. In the unlikely event that during our conversation I hear anything which makes me worried that someone might be in danger of harm, I might have to inform relevant agencies of this.

How will the data be used?

Following analysis of all data collected, participants will be invited to provide feedback on their perception of the accuracy of the findings or interpretations offered. Ultimately, findings from the data will be presented within a PhD thesis and published in both journal articles and conference papers.

Electronic data will be password protected and physical data will be stored in a locked facility within my private office, only the researcher will have access to the data. The data will be retained for ten years in accordance with University of Glasgow guidelines.

This project has been considered and approved by the University of Glasgow Research Ethics Committee.

Contact details:

If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study my contact details are as follows:

Brigid Golden, Brigid.golden@mic.ul.ie , 061-204991.

If you have concerns about this study and wish to file a complaint with someone independent please contact: The College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow Ethics Officer, Dr. Muir Houston, email: muir.houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix I: Guiding questions for personal reflections

What topic was covered?

What methodologies were used?

How did the session plan to develop critical thinking about global justice issues?

What did students learn/how did they engage in the tasks?

How do I know how successful the session was?

What would I do differently?

Any questions I would like to ask students in follow up interviews or focus groups?

Any other observations.

Appendix J: Observation checklist for critical friend

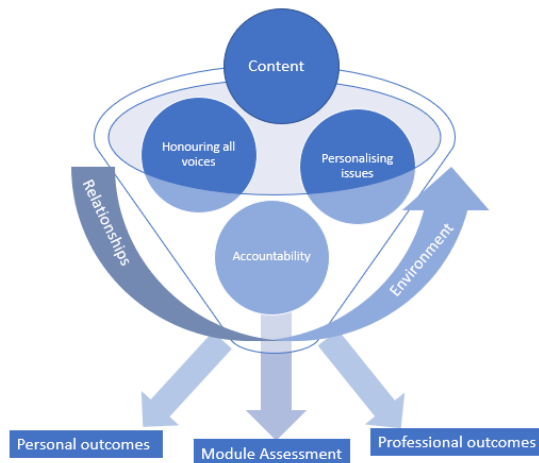
Checklist used during cycles 1 and 2:

In my study I am aiming to support students to develop their critical thinking skills in the context of global education. I would welcome feedback generally in relation to my teaching approaches and style. In addition, I would like you to track if and where you notice a focus on critical thinking, how effective it was, and what I could do differently.

For the purposes of this study, critical thinking is understood as:

1. Making connections within and between systems (local and global but also make links with the past and the future);
2. Ability to reflect on contested terminology and develop personal understandings of same;
3. The ability to identify responses/solutions to complexities/problems/injustices;
4. Understanding the significance of power relations within an international development context;
5. Engage in self-reflection- Use and respond to thought provoking questions – make links between global issues and both your personal life and your chosen career;
6. Engage in values-based literacy/ engage in critical thinking through a specific values-lens;
7. Ability to question orthodoxies;
8. Belief in/commitment to criticality – interest in questioning the world around them

Checklist used during cycle 3:



The framework supports planning for global education with a focus on supporting the development of critical thinking. The conditions for learning which support the lesson phases focus on developing positive relationships with students and ensuring the teaching environment is welcoming and conducive to learning. The four lesson phases are designed to be included in all sessions but may occur simultaneously or each require different lengths of time during different sessions.

Can you see the framework in action? Can you see benefit to it or drawbacks to it?

My manner/relationship with students- how do I build it or focus on it?

Who is the “I” who is teaching?

How does the manner of PhD impact on my teaching?

Can you see ways in which critical thinking is developed or focused on?

Within my PhD, critical thinking is understood as:

1. Making connections within and between systems (local and global but also make links with the past and the future);
2. Ability to reflect on contested terminology and develop personal understandings of same;
3. The ability to identify responses/solutions to complexities/problems/injustices;
4. Understanding the significance of power relations within an international development context;
5. Engage in self-reflection- Use and respond to thought provoking questions – make links between global issues and both your personal life and your chosen career;
6. Engage in values-based literacy/ engage in critical thinking through a specific values-lens;
7. Ability to question orthodoxies;
8. Belief in/commitment to criticality – interest in questioning the world around them

Appendix K: Initial codes generated during phase one of analysis

Example of those generated during analysis of cycle 1. Includes possible codes, and some reflective notes made during phase one of analysis.

Possible codes:

Elements of the evolving skillset which became the *Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning*

In line with what was taught

Different to what was taught

They don't see me as a lecturer – keep saying they and them and forgetting I am one of them (wondering if it would be different if I were older)

Suggestions for change

Each methodology review of specific activities etc.

Things working well to be kept

Personal changes/impact OR resistance to change

Professional changes/impact

Lack of knowledge/awareness

Not answered

Misunderstanding – of question, of concept

Positive stories

Negative stories

Negative aspects/ critiques of critical thinking

Applies question/task to children/classroom rather than themselves

Inability to link to own lives

Definitions of CT – parent node and child nodes for different elements that come up

Inability to answer / to find negative aspects or to question and critique when asked to

Evidence of students questioning

Using argumentation and rhetoric

Acknowledging own bias and assumptions

Appreciation of multiple perspectives

Links between CT and education/teaching

What students like about lecturer approaches

What students don't like about lecturer approaches

Links to curriculum

Flaws in my methodologies (interview techniques, survey questions etc.)

Visible limits to their knowledge or interpretation of education system – focused on their past experiences rather than changes and current focus

(don't know how to code this) they don't contradict or challenge each other often

Notes:

Check if they are more likely to misinterpret questions or tasks if they also use inappropriate language or make it seem as though they have missed lectures etc.

Reflection: listening to the focus groups there is a fine line between when I am their teacher and when I am an interviewer – a teacher would interrupt and give them additional information or correct them or lead them in directions – an interviewer lets their views or ideas stand – I am unsure which role to follow ethically.

Ideas for activities to hone teaching and links to framework:

Prompt more with examples before asking to complete tasks – eg. Examples of completed photograph tasks before they try them

Whole session dedicated to learning to question information and back up opinions with knowledge and facts – giving alternative ‘facts’ from ‘reputable’ sources

Last session of first semester – creating chart to show connections between different development issues and their lives/ schools/ education etc.

Mapping connections between teacher – children – society – vision for education – personal history/beliefs/experiences – college education – global education

In controversial issues session have a workshop on scenarios and how you might respond using the 5 different types of responses

Appendix L: Example of coded extract from data, phase two of data analysis

In this screenshot from Nvivo, you can see lines of text that have been coded highlighted in yellow. On the right hand side you can see the coding striped that indicate what codes have been assigned to different sections of text.

The screenshot displays the Nvivo software interface. The top menu bar includes File, Home, Import, Create, Explore, Share, and Document Tools. The Document Tools menu is open, showing options like Document, Highlight, Coding Stripes, Annotations, Relationships, and View. The main workspace shows a document titled 'Transcript - Round 2 Semester 1'. The text in the document is as follows:

Student 3: Like subconsciously or consciously, like, no one's really objective. I feel like I'm a critical thinker every day when I try and like, stay impartial –

Brighid: Yeah

Student 3: And assess what my own feelings towards something are, rather than just taking in the message that someone else is giving me?

Brighid: Yeah, yeah.

Student 3: If that makes sense?

Brighid: Yeah, no it does. Would that ring through for you guys as well? That idea of trying to stay impartial? Or maybe not?

Student 1: I don't think I'd be – I think I would be pretty influenced in what people would say, I feel like I'd like to think that I could be impartial, but I think I wouldn't be quite as, like, impartial than what I think

Brighid: Yeah, that's alright. That's an interesting way to look at it. That idea of staying impartial, eh, I like it, it's interesting. It sounds hard though – is it difficult?

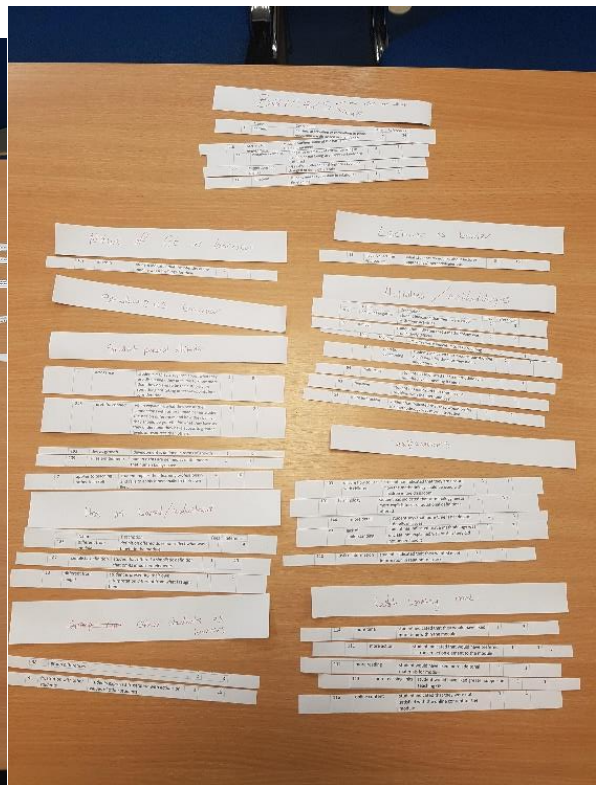
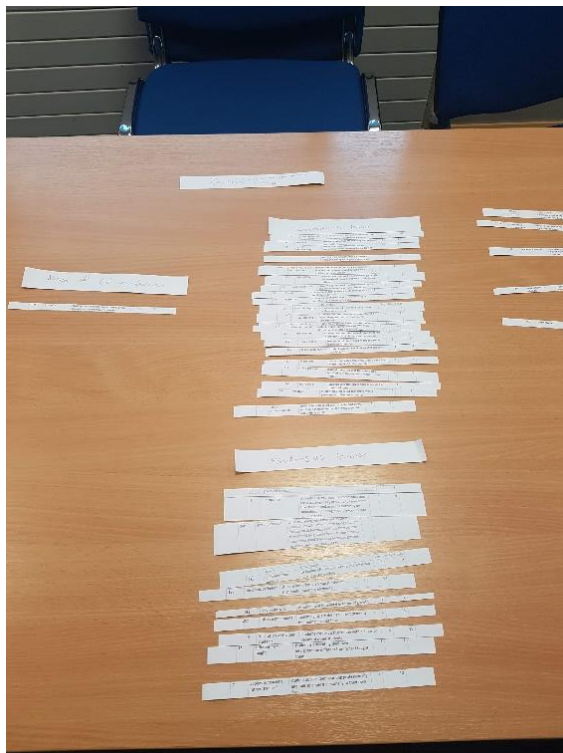
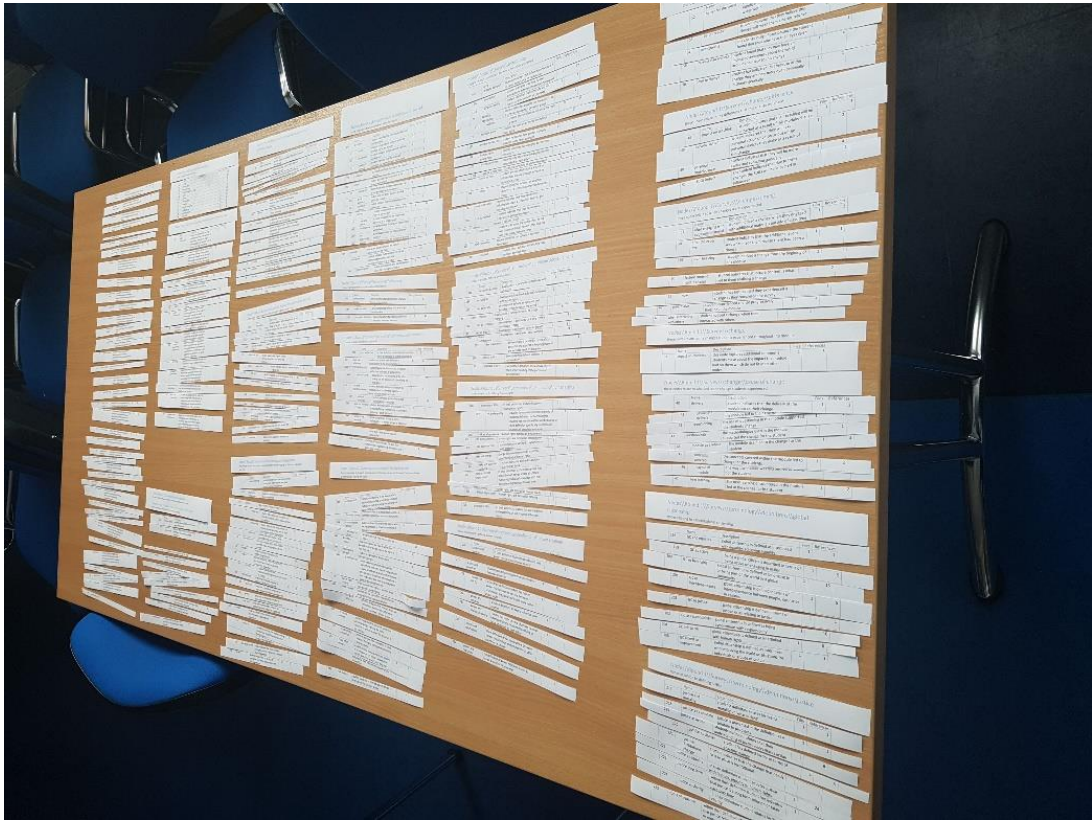
Student 3: Ehm, it's probably difficult when, like, it's easy sometimes because sometimes it's very clear sometimes to see people's motivations. Like if I, like, if you're watching Fox News, it's easy to

The coding strip on the right side of the document shows the following codes assigned to the text:

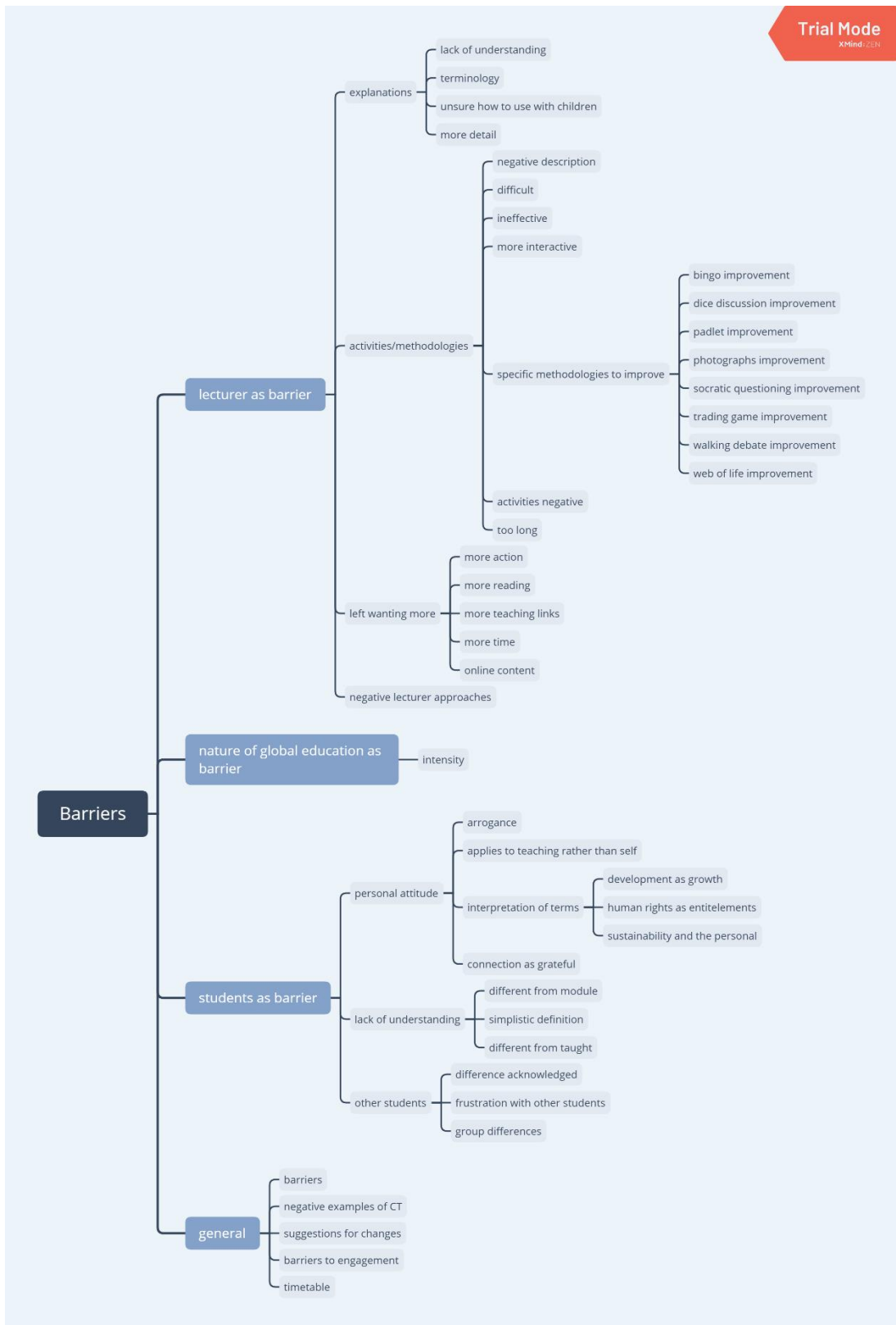
- CT as impartiality
- CT as questioning status quo
- frustration with fellow students
- MIC students as not critical
- reflective practice

The bottom status bar shows 'BG 14 items Codes: 23 References: 111 Read-Only Line: 1 Column: 0'.

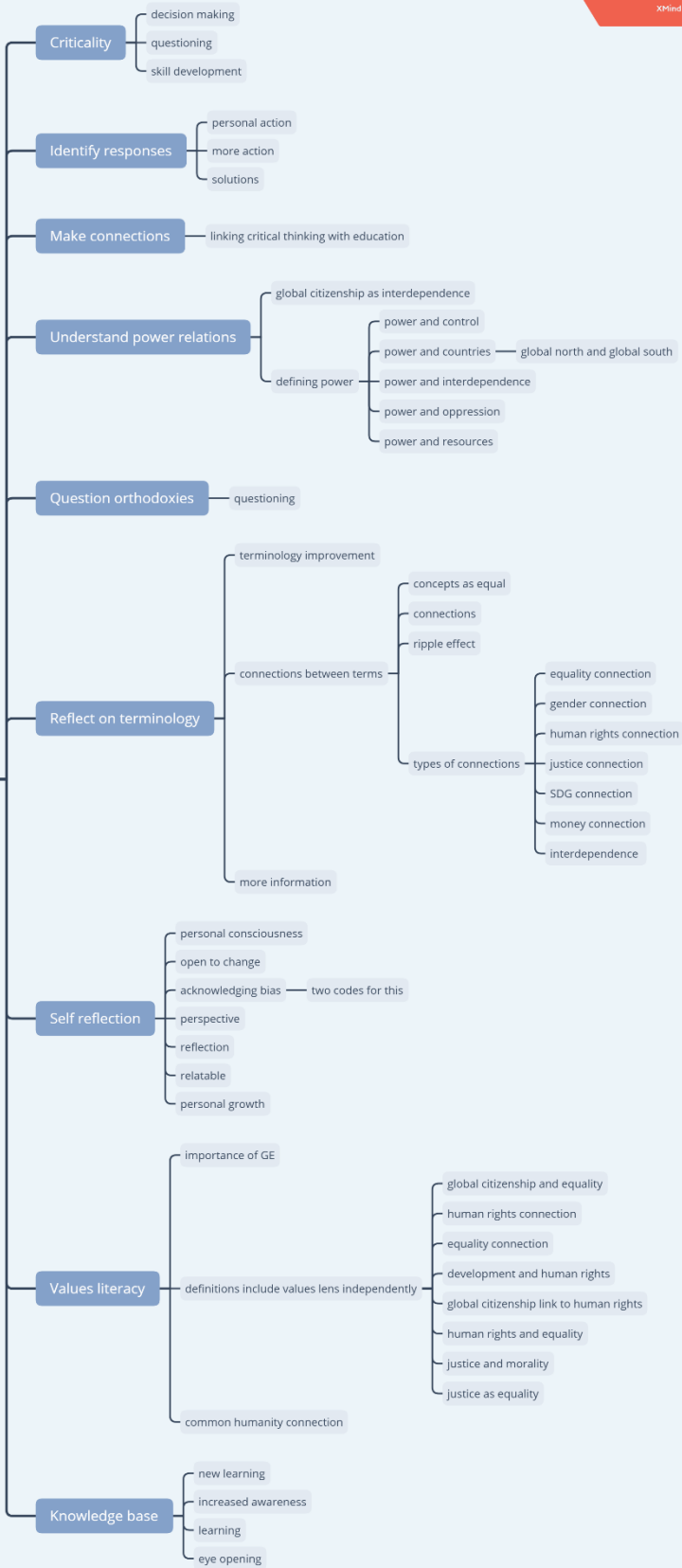
Appendix M: Photographs of phase three of data analysis

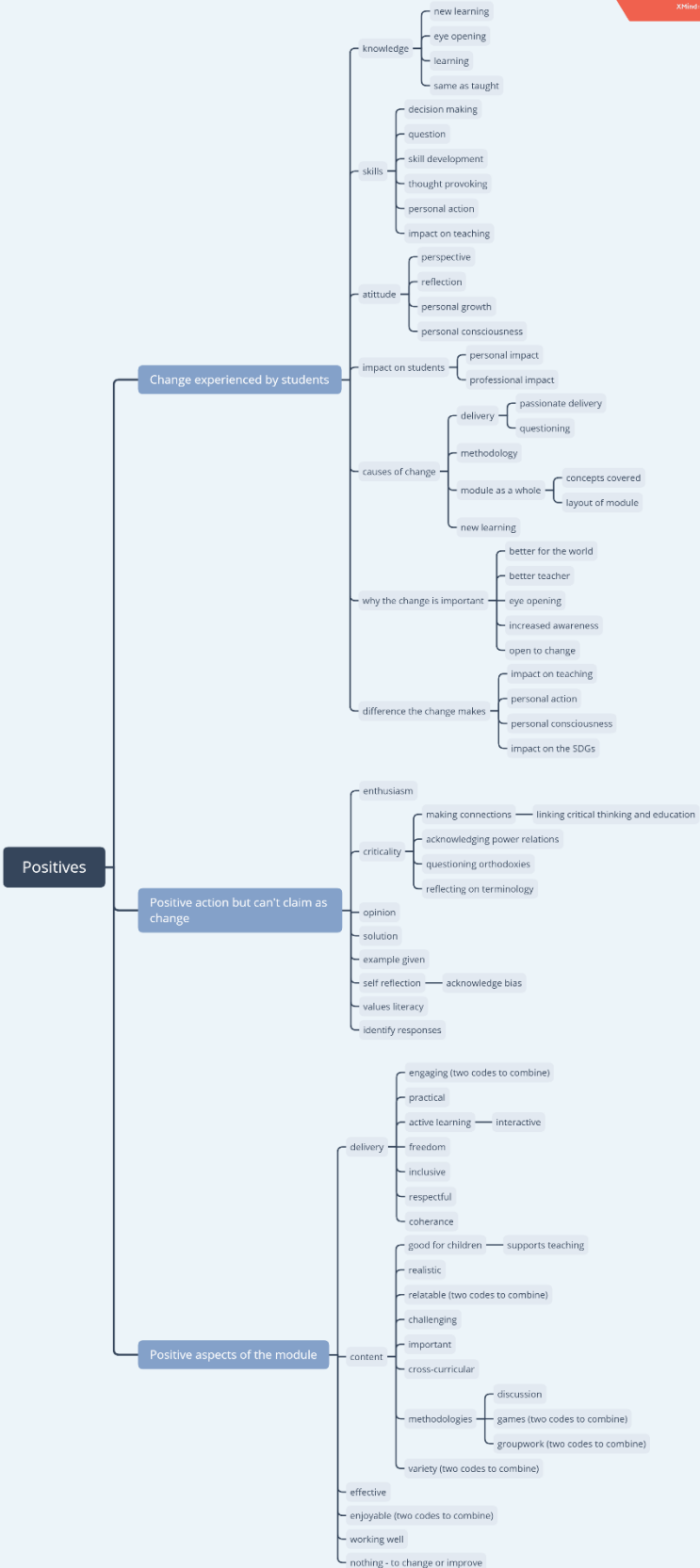


Appendix N: Thematic Maps, phase five of data analysis (cycle one)



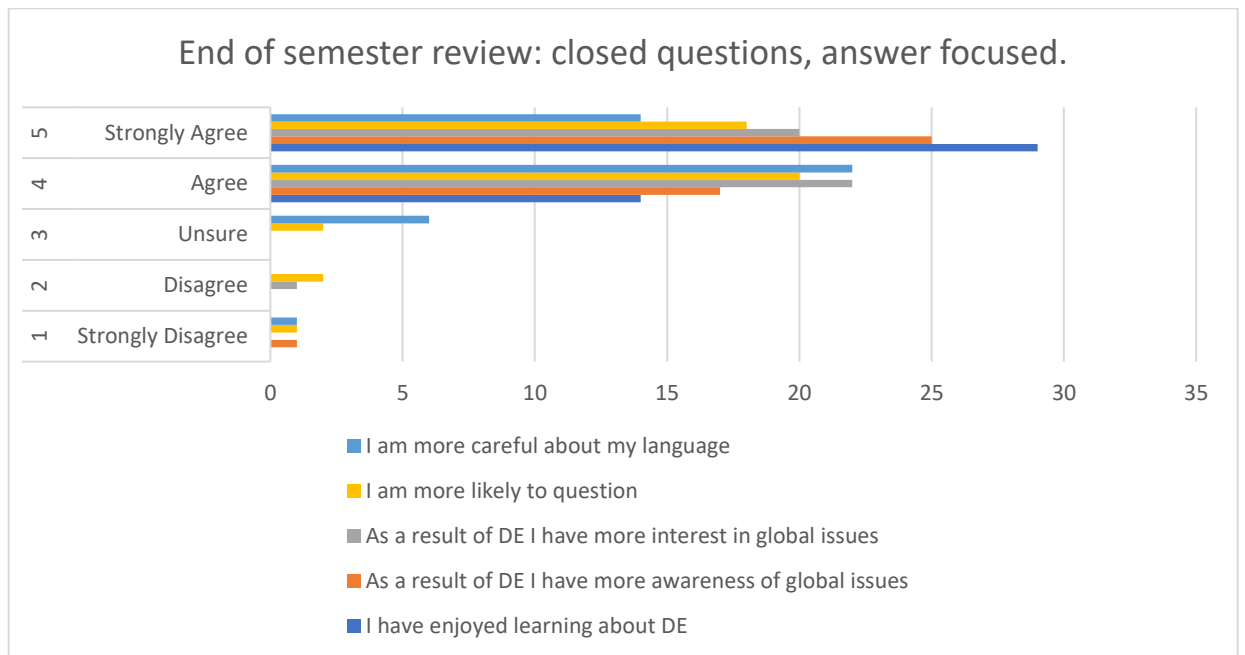
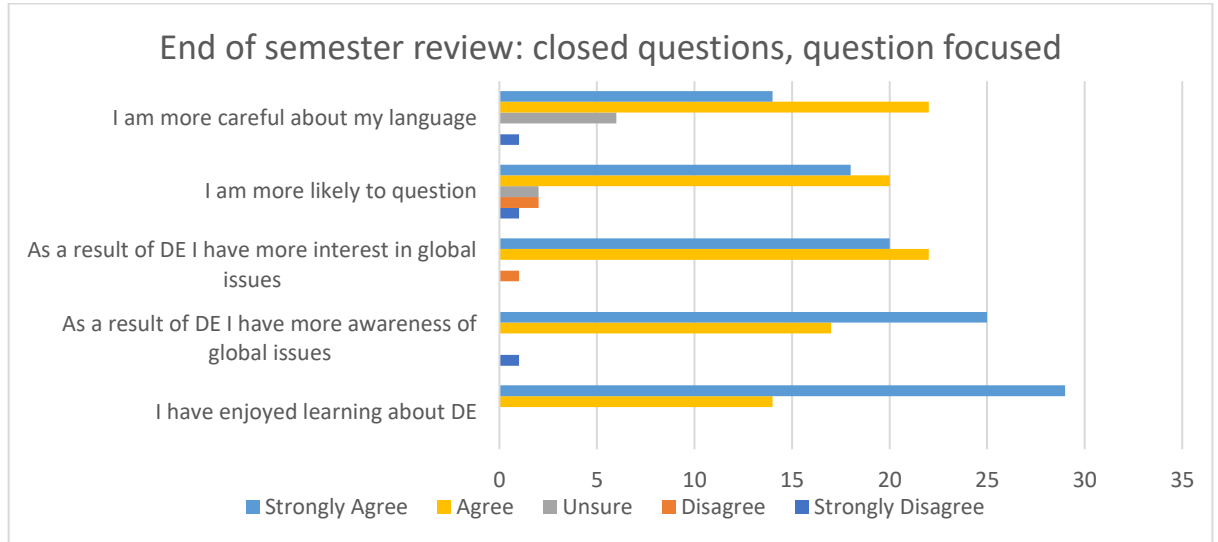
Critical thinking framework



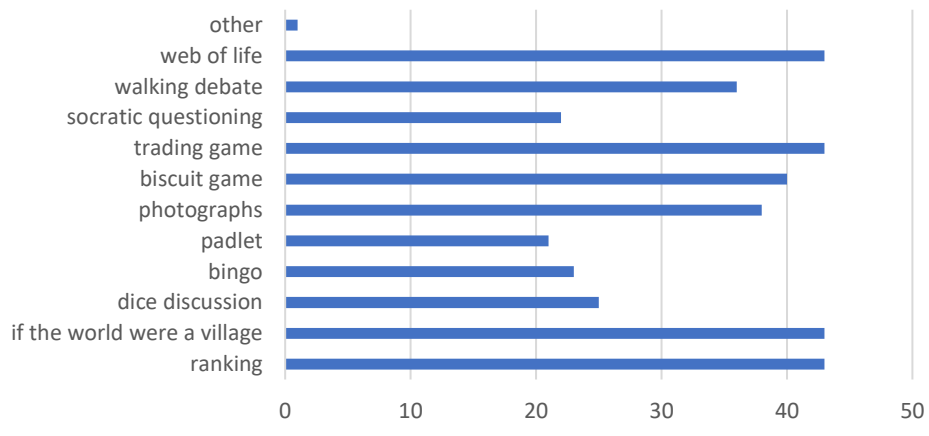


Appendix P: Examples of quantitative data organisation in Excel

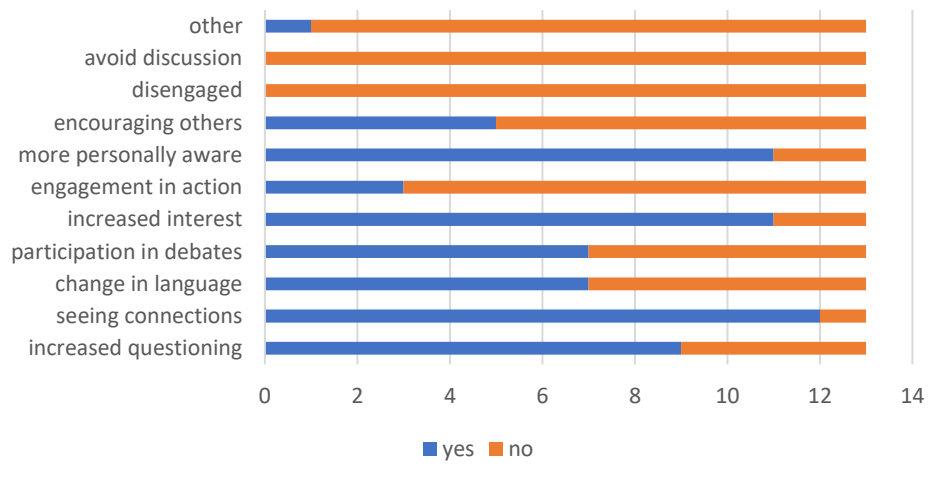
Examples shared are some of the graphs created in excel from the end of semester survey and most significant change stories completed by students in cycle 1.



Methodologies that supported critical thinking development - student choice



Most significant change identified





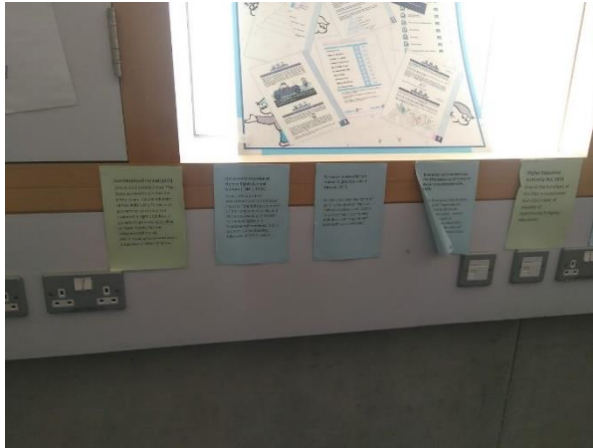
Appendix Q: Changes made to teaching between cycles one and two

Changes made for round two as a result of emergent findings:

- Division allows for focus on personal development;
- New assignment created that allows for focus on understanding concepts, making connections between different concepts or ideas and self-reflection;
- Reenvisage socratic questioning session;
- Give opportunities for feedback and questions;
- Introduced a baseline measure to gauge understanding of development and critical thinking experience;
- Trying to introduce an 'interactive classroom'
- Using more photographs and videos, particularly ensuring that each topic had a variety of support materials in different formats online;
- Focus on asking questions of students – many of the first semester sessions were previously delivered to large groups so when used with smaller groups in cycle two, an effort to include more questioning was made;

Appendix R: Examples of classroom displays used within cycle three

| Displays | Description |
|--|--|
|  | <p>Comhlámh Code of Conduct on Images and Messages:</p> <p>The code of conduct for ethical use of images is explicitly taught to students, but is also displayed in the room. This helped to remind us all of what to consider when trying to represent another person's image or story.</p> |
|  | <p>Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry guidelines:</p> <p>The OSDE guidelines served as our classroom commitments and I would regularly refer to them in my teaching to remind students what ways of working we had established and agreed to within the room. The simplified version displayed states that 1. Everyone brings valid knowledge to the space, and 2. All knowledge can be questioned.</p> |



National and international timeline of relevant policies:

At the side of the room is a policy timeline. While not explicitly taught within the modules relevant to this study, students often read them and referred to them in their answers or contributions. They supported students knowledge development.



The Sustainable Development Goals and Maps:

The SDGs are displayed to remind students of the breath of issues that relate to sustainability. I referred to them regularly as a framework which underpinned some of the conversations we were having.

The back wall of the room also includes a variety of maps which represent the globe in different ways. While only briefly included within lectures, these maps were the topic of many informal conversations and students spent a lot of time studying them before and after classes. The different representations of the world helped to implicitly reinforce messages in relation to criticality and questioning orthodoxies.



De Bonos' Thinking Hats:

Displaying De Bono's *Thinking Hats* and associated questions in the room provided prompts both for students and for me during sessions to use to support us all in ensuring that we were considering topics being discussed from multiple angles.



Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in both Irish and English:

The dual-language display of the CRC, which uses very child friendly language and graphics, served as a reminder that these types of conversations are possible with young children. Furthermore, I regularly referred to them during sessions as a framework to situate our discussions of different topics.

Appendix S: Mapping the Planning Tool onto the skills included within the
Model for Teaching Critical Global Learning

| Area of model | Challenges experiences in cycles one and two | Elements of the planning tool which respond to these challenges |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Develop a commitment to criticality | Provide ambitious yet achievable picture of criticality | <p>Pre-conditions for learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment (displays – immersing learning in critical thinking and reminding me of critical questions or frames to use) - Environment (setting clear expectations from the outset and recapping regularly) <p>Lesson elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging content (modelling critical thinking) - Honouring all voices (providing opportunities for regularly practicing criticality) - Personalising issues (Linking criticality skills to students own lives, making them more relevant) |
| Develop and use a knowledge base | Responding to student individuality within large groups | <p>Pre-conditions for learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationships (getting to know students and the common challenges they have informs teaching) - Environment (sessions follow a predictable structure which provides opportunities for both scaffolded and independent learning) <p>Lesson elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The combination of all four elements in every session ensure a balance between content and process, supporting students to develop both their knowledge and skills consistently. |
| Question orthodoxies | Questioning commonly accepted orthodoxies is a difficult task | <p>Pre-conditions for learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment (the physical environment includes a variety of displays which reminds students and teacher to consistently question and challenge what is encountered) <p>Lesson elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The combination of elements provides students with multiple perspectives on each topic. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Honouring all voices (students are asked regularly to engage with questioning the content that is shared) - Accountability (Students are encouraged to remain engaged throughout sessions in order to be prepared to feedback) |
| Engage in self-reflection | Student self-reflection is difficult to observe and measure as a teacher | <p>Pre-conditions for learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment (reflection is modelled at the beginning of every class) <p>Lesson elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personalising issues (students are asked to reflect regularly on their reactions and responses to the materials being covered, accompanied by instructions and guidance from teacher) |
| Use a values lens | finding an appropriate balance between including multiple perspectives and giving time to discriminatory views | <p>Pre-conditions for learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values (values are embedded in the learning environment and planning for the module) - Relationships (values of the module are modelled in the interactions between student and teacher) - Environment (learning is immersed in human rights through the displays in the classroom) <p>Lesson elements:</p> <p>The combination of lesson elements provides opportunities for multiple perspectives which can be addressed and challenged by both teacher and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content (the values dimension of topics is explicitly discussed) - Personalising issues (students have the opportunity to consider their own values in light of what they are engaging with) |
| Outcomes | Students often displayed a tendency to oversimplify issues and misinterpret the justice approach being promoted within modules | <p>Pre-conditions for learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment (reflections focus students from the outset of sessions on the justice element of the topic) <p>Lesson elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content (the implications for individuals and wider society in relation to issues is shared) - Personalising issues (students are invited to consider the implications from their learning in their own lives and the wider world) |

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