Global Citizenship Education:
Teaching Strategies for a Gendered Perspective

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Abstract

Global citizenship education (GCE) emerged from a western, male-centric perspective and the challenge exists to frame GCE in a more inclusive manner representing a gendered global view. In this paper, critical pedagogy is presented as a pathway and rationale for the inclusion of a gendered perspective in GCE. *Critical* GCE, as opposed to *soft* GCE, is engagement towards dismantling the systems and structures that contribute to creating and sustaining global issues. The aim is to build one's agency to contribute to eradication of the root causes driving negative impact. This engaged approach to GCE is strongly aligned with a critical pedagogy. Three teaching strategies are presented to illustrate the critical pedagogy principles of practice including *reconceptualizing power*, *integrating lived narratives*, and *dyadic dialogue*. Through student reflections, aspects of critical GCE that serve to capture female students' authentic self are brought to life. The transition to a gendered GCE represents a commitment to inclusion that addresses and rectifies inequities that sustain oppressive systems. Implications for including a gendered GCE perspective in higher education are included.

Key Words: global citizenship education, gender, critical pedagogy, power, dialogue

"Another classroom is possible…we cannot create that other world, that world where many worlds fit, unless we first create another classroom, one in which all voices and lives count…" (Armbruster-Sandoval, 2005, p. 34).

Imagining another world, where many worlds fit, has been my approach to global citizenship education (GCE), emerging over the past nine years as my understanding of leadership radically transformed. As a professor in the field of leadership studies, I was trained

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and educated in the United States, in a western leadership perspective. Recognition of how embedded this worldview was in my leadership perspective emerged slowly. I did not identify the saturation until I arrived in Japan and began teaching university leadership courses. As I selected the premier leadership textbooks, typically written by white men, rarely identifying their positionality as western and male centric, I questioned the relevance of the texts given the absence of representation of diverse voices from marginalized communities (e.g., Harvard Business Review, 2011). The male-based perspective of leadership was in fact normalized, while the topic of female or diversity leadership was usually an add-on chapter at the end of the textbook (e.g., Northhouse, 2017). As I broadened my worldview of leadership through the inclusion of diverse scholars, student's lived narratives, and my own experiences, leadership for social change and as a process of transformation became central to my understanding of leadership. Shifting from a static concept to an experience that one can choose to practice daily, my reconceptualization of leadership was now guided by purpose, and this became my new paradigm. As noted by Urosevich and Soetero-Ng (2018), "leadership is a daily practice of action and service" (p. 295). This idea of embodying a practice also resonated with my understanding of GCE which shared a similar history with leadership.

Global citizenship education also emerged from a western perspective and like leadership, the challenge exists to frame GCE in a more inclusive manner. For global citizenship to represent a global perspective and experience, the concept must be decolonized and inclusive (Abdi, Shultz, & Pillay, 2015). Further, Arnot (2009) challenges us to consider how gender is, or is not, embedded in the construction of a global citizen in order to deconstruct and tackle gender inequities in society. While the literature on global citizenship education remains seemingly absent of a gendered perspective, the concepts of citizenship and agency are gendered (Arshad-Ayaz & Naseem, 2015; Mohanty, 2003; Tormey & Gleeson, 2012). Thus, the gendering of GCE merits attention.

In this paper, critical pedagogy is presented as a pathway and rationale for the inclusion of a gendered perspective in GCE. First, Andreotti's (2006) *soft* versus *critical* GCE will be introduced. Then, Ikeda's 2014 elements for an educational program of global citizenship will be shared, demonstrating alignment with critical GCE's goals and strategies. Central to GCE is critical pedagogy involving both inquiry and dialogue. To showcase the inclusion of those that are marginalized, Ellsworth and hooks' positions are then presented. A case study will present diverse teaching strategies in higher education to highlight how these principles were operationalized in the classroom, with a spotlight on the importance of building trust

through community and dialogic practice. This paper does not present a definitive curriculum or syllabus on GCE, rather its findings suggest that GCE can transition from a *soft* approach to a *critical* approach, and by doing so becomes inclusive and transformative. This transition represents a commitment to addressing and rectifying inequities causing global problems and sustaining oppressive systems. Implications for including a gendered GCE perspective will close the paper.

Critical Global Citizenship Education

Andreotti (2006) states that the complexity of local/global processes and contexts are rooted in inequalities of power. This guiding assumption undergirds both the definition and strategy of *critical* GCE. The word critical does not refer to right or wrong, or a critique of GCE, rather it holds the space for learners to develop skills of critical engagement and reflexivity. An important step is to examine the purpose of GCE, and to ask, for whose benefit (Bruce, North, and Fitzpatrick, 2019)? If the purpose of GCE remains unexamined and GCE is seen as abstract elements of a common humanity, disregarding the imbalance of power, locally and globally, the focus of attention will remain at a cursory level (Ellsworth, 1989).

Critical GCE is different than a *soft* approach to GCE and the meaningful differences are succinctly presented by Andreotti (2006). For example, *soft* GCE may name the global problem as *poverty*, while critical GCE would name the problem as *inequality and injustice,* thus connecting to the source of the problem. She states, the nature of the problem is not the lack of resources or development, rather it is the "complex structures, systems, assumptions, power relations and attitudes…[that] create and maintain exploitation and enforced disempowerment and tend to eliminate difference" (p. 48). *Soft* GCE would promote raising awareness of global issues while *critical* GCE goes further to include, "promoting engagement with global issues and perspectives and an ethical relationship to difference, addressing complexity and power relations" (p. 48). The goals also differ. While soft GCE looks at empowering individuals to advance towards a socially acquired ideal world, the goal of *critical* GCE is to "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 (Andreotti, 2006, p. 48). Within *critical* GCE, reimagining the concept of power and encouraging learners to connect to one's voice become building blocks for a problem-posing learning environment (Torres & Bosio, 2020). In an earlier study (Guajardo & Vohra, in press), a critical pedagogy approach was found to contribute to a reimagining of one's understanding of self and others, as well as the emergence of *voice* and *agency*. To support a more inclusive, gendered GCE, what elements are

needed for an educational program of global citizenship?

In Ikeda's 2014 Peace Proposal, *Value Creation for Global Change: Building Resilient and Sustainable Societies*, three elements were suggested for a GCE program. The first element is an exploration of the causes of global issues and a deeper understanding of these causes. This mirrors Andreotti's (2006) critical GCE as it too has a focus on understanding the nature of the problem within structures and systems of inequity, connecting to the source or root cause of the problem. The second element identified by Ikeda is to have a heightened awareness and sensitivity to the early signs of global problems and to then take action. This matches Andreotti's stance of promoting engagement to address the complexity of the issue. Ikeda's third element recognizes the connection and resulting negative impact of actions that benefit one's own country at the expense of the other. Similarly, Andreotti's goal of GCE is to reflect critically on the impact of relationships and inequities, taking responsibility for change.

Central to Andreotti's (2006) and Ikeda's (2014) approaches to a critical GCE is engagement with the systems and structures that contribute to creating and sustaining the root causes of global issues. Both impress upon the learner and educator an approach of engagement, building on one's agency to contribute to eradication of the problem. This engaged approach to GCE is strongly aligned with a critical pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy (CP), as introduced by Freire (1970) is based on a social justice lens and suggests that the student is not an empty vessel, but rather an individual who brings their hope, despair, and lived experience to a learning space (Freire 1998). The lens of CP is directed at empowerment and citizenship, where teachers and learners co-create a space that fosters critical inquiry, agency, and deeper awareness leading to action. Simply stated, "critical pedagogy as a field confronts this gap between what is and what could be and all the social inequalities that produce it" (Gore, 2015, p. 81). It identifies principles of practice that aim to increase equity as opposed to outlining a definitive list of teaching strategies.

My own educational approach brought together these principles of practice that also informed what bell hooks (1994) refers to as engaged pedagogy. This approach to teaching requires "expanding beyond to imagine and enact pedagogical practices that engage directly both the concern for interrogating biases in curricula that reinscribe systems of domination (such as racism and sexism) while simultaneously providing new ways to teach diverse groups

of students" (p. 10). My goal as a professor is to create a learning space of possibility within a university course, through a process of unlearning, relearning, and learning.

To incorporate a gendered perspective in course content would require intentionality in designing teaching strategies that allow female and male students to feel safe, to reach across differences, and to incorporate a spirit of belonging so that a generic sense of unity would not wash out the differences of narratives and lived experiences. A learning approach described by hooks (1994) reflects what is needed as she states, "⋯to have a transformative impact on women, then creating a context where we can engage in open critical dialogue with one another, where we can debate and discuss without fear of emotional collages, where we can hear and know one another in the difference and complexities of our experience, is essential" (p. 110). Ellsworth (1989) cautions, however, that critical pedagogy can fall prey to reproducing the very structures of oppression it is trying to eliminate. As critical pedagogy seeks to empower, to give space for diverse student voices, and to utilize dialogue, what must be addressed is a sharper, deeper understanding of each of these elements such that relational domination is not reproduced in the classroom.

To interrupt existing power relationships in the classroom, Ellsworth (1989) posits that the learning experience must be relevant to students' lives and refrain from bending towards abstraction. This requires connecting learning to historical and political contexts, inviting lived experiences into the learning space, "⋯urging all of us to open our minds and hearts⋯ so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions [to] celebrate teaching that enables transgressions - a movement against and beyond boundaries" (hooks, 1994, p. 12). Cultivating a questioning mind and interrupting existing power dynamics allows for reimaging and co-creating to occur (Guajardo & Vohra, in press). In the process of learning, unlearning, and relearning, students were able to question, disassemble, and integrate their understanding of the world. They demonstrated the capacity to reclaim and revision their sense of self, others, and concepts such as identity, leadership, and power. The present paper expands on this work (Guajardo & Vohra, in press) and delves deeper into the teaching strategies that supported this change.

The change process is a transformational process. In the work of embracing differences (Guajardo, Taneja, & Vohra, 2021), it was noted that,

"Engaged learning is⋯where students courageously step into their vulnerability, to

connect to and deepen their understanding of themselves, in order to then approach the other⋯to make meaning of the process and their experience of the 'other.' Through dialogue that was intentional in deepening critical inquiry and heightening self-awareness, students engaged in experiences that allowed them to co-create with others" (p. 9).

The inclusion of a gendered GCE perspective will require reaching and engaging across differences. The Embracing Differences Change Model (Guajardo, Taneja, & Vohra, 2021) names *trust* as a necessary agent of change. "An implicit trust was built through such exchanges that permeated the class⋯[a] nurturing field where ideas, creativity, and co-creation flourished. Sharing happened as a genuine desire to reflect, connect with others, and develop mutually without vying for a position" (p. 7). The question then is how to create this other classroom where all lives count, and GCE becomes inclusive and gendered by design and not by default?

Case Study

This exploratory case study examined teaching strategies that contribute to a gendered GCE. The purpose was to identify those class experiences that had been most impactful to the students. The selected teaching strategies operationalize CP principles of practice that activate a process of self-awareness and change, critical inquiry, and an empowering praxis. An analysis was conducted of final reflection essays, searching for patterns that spoke of impact (Yin, 2018). Three teaching strategies were selected based on student reflections at the end of the semester of a university course taught on women's leadership. Students in the 15-week university course represented the Global South and Global North, and included thirty-eight students from East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, South America, and Europe. Students were asked to reflect on which texts and/or activities had been most impactful and to explain why. This question allowed students to self-select and connect readings or activities to their own definition of impact which often captured transformation, deep insights, and change. Teaching strategies for *reconceptualizing power*, *integrating lived narratives*, and the *role of dialogue* will be described and accompanied by student voice. This will serve to illustrate the CP principles of practice.

Reconceptualizing Power

Two exercises were introduced to reconceptualize the understanding of power. In the first exercise students faced a partner and one student was asked to make two fists. The

second student was told that their goal was to open their partner's fists. No direction was given as to how the fists were to be opened. The goal of the activity was to allow students to exercise power and then to review the strategy selected. Students employed a myriad of strategies for opening their partner's fists, from attempting to open the fists with force to politely asking their partner to open their fists. Once the students were given a few minutes to accomplish the task, a debriefing occurred. It is during the reflection of the debriefing session that learning occurs. To conduct an exercise without deep, thoughtful reflection foregoes the opportunity of the exercise becoming a teachable moment.

When asked to explain their approach which ranged from *force* to *persuasion,* some students revealed that they felt compelled to use force. Other students conveyed a verbal request, while some students employed tactics such as tickling. As one student explained,

"*[The] exercise…made us think and act inside a relationship with some power imbalance, I was the leader thus I had power over my partner. This meant that I could do whatever I wanted under my volition, thus I now find it strange and even sad that my first thought was to use physical force instead of my own words…this is the exercise that has made me reflect the most in the way that we are socialized into society, in how we are meant to think that only by force and imposing ourselves with violent means we are asserting our leadership over a group.*"

"*It was a memorable activity because I remember I used force to ask her to open her fist…I realized I was not in control of myself despite learning so much about love and non-violence, the first thing I thought of was force.*"

Through readings and exercises, students began to question what they knew and how they have been raised within their family, community, and the influence of society. Questioning and reflecting on power dynamics is central to CP, as noted by Mohanty (1989),

"*A number of educators, Paulo Freire among them, have argued that education represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations…education becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of the lived culture of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical social and political positions.*" *(p. 184).*

The second exercise was an opportunity to create a symbol of power from newsprint. In small groups students worked collaboratively to imagine what symbol might represent their belief of what power could and should be. As noted by one student,

"*redefining the meaning of power, was most impactful and brought me hope for the future. Through the activity to create a symbol of 'New Power' I learned that we have the right to construct a new meaning of an important term⋯I always had thought that definition is something already fixed by society and had never thought of challenging it...nobody ever told me that I can change the definition of a word and create my own. However, this class taught me that it is possible to newly define a term in a way we would like to see and that is my responsibility as a person who is aware of social inequality.*"

Students shared how these two activities changed their idea of power, pushing them to reconceptualize the concept of power from negative to purposeful. It was evident that these opportunities to question, reframe, and integrate new ways of being and knowing were altering students' understanding of their own sense of agency.

Integrating Lived Narratives

Students read texts authored by scholars that were centered in women's leadership and culture such as *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about how Women Become Leaders* (Eagly & Carli, 2007), *Women and Leadership Around the World* (Madsen et al., 2015), and *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (hooks, 2000). To connect the texts to the students' experiences from diverse countries, student panels were formed consisting of three students each from different countries. Students were able to share their own experiences around selected topics. Connecting text to lived narratives increased the relevancy of the class content as noted by students.

"*As a panelist, I had the opportunity to revisit my unique experiences⋯while it is only a tiny representation of the reality going on in my country, my story is just as valid as any other and deserves to be heard. In the beginning, I felt a little hesitant to speak in front of the entire class⋯However, I saw the genuine care, interest, and passion brimming from their eyes. Seeing this, I realized that we were definitely successful in creating a safe, inclusive environment where we respect and learn from each other. The energy in the room allowed me to open up and be completely genuine and honest about*

my thoughts and feelings…"

"*The most impactful activity from these classes was the panel discussion. It was an unforgettable experience. I was blessed to have the opportunity to share [an] authentic experience with my fellow classmates about the reality in my home country…The readings related to women leaders in south and southeast Asia covered some main points and statistics of the challenges in women leadership but omitted the authentic experiences and how…leaders in power create a change and improve the society by including women leaders in any field in the community.*"

In addition to making the content relevant, sharing one's narrative allowed students to discover their own voice. One student shared how her experience as a panelist empowered her.

"*I've had a lot of moments where I felt empowered throughout the semester, but this was one of the unforgettable ones…[this] was the first time I felt that my voice, my story matters and that I have something to share to the world as well.*"

In addition to listening to the lived narratives of classmates, students were also exposed to videos and guest speakers. One video was The Danger of a Single Story (Adichie, 2009) and one guest speaker was a woman leader from India.

[This video and the guest speaker were] the main contributors towards shaping my view of the term feminism. It was from their courage to speak up, courage not to conform, courage to pursue what they want to do, that I also gained the courage to declare myself a feminist…[they] gave me hope that culture is possible to change. I used to think of culture as something that is largely fixed…but [they] taught me that changing a culture does not mean to change someone's mind. That would be arrogant…it is to not lose hope and to start with ourselves.

Integrating lived narratives acknowledged the importance of intentionally positioning the voices that students hear in a learning space. As hooks (1994) notes, "Accepting the decentering of the West globally embracing multiculturalism, compels educators to focus attention on the issue of voice. Who speaks?" (p. 40). The gathering of narratives reveals that "there are partial narratives that some social groups or cultures have, and others can never

know, [this is] an opportunity to build a kind of social and educational interdependency" (p. 319) that recognizes differences as strengths. Individuals from marginalized communities assess the risk and cost of what is/can be said to whom and in what context (Ellsworth, 1989). Disclosure necessitates being seen by others, and this occurs through a "highly complex negotiation of the politics of knowing and being known" (p. 313). As Ellsworth notes, critical pedagogy must address the issues of trust, fear, risk, and desire around issues of identity and politics in the classroom.

Dyadic Dialogue

A third teaching strategy was the use of dialogic exercises to begin to share one's voice and to listen to the voice of another. In my teaching experience I have found dialogue to be a tool central to building trust and community, which both contribute to global citizenship education (Guajardo, 2021). It is a teaching strategy that can engage students to connect with themselves and others. Ikeda (2001) shares that dialogue can lead to "the transformation of opposing viewpoints, changing them from wedges that drive people apart into bridges that link them together" (p. 57). Dialogue results in change; change that leads to action.

Darder (2002) reflects on how "dialogue represents a powerful and transformative political process of interaction between people [and it] requires the interactive and ongoing participation with and among people. We cannot be involved in dialogue alone and in isolation" (p. 103).

Students were trained in how to participate in dyadic dialogue employing an adapted version of constructivist listening, which is a structured conversation between two individuals where the goal is to listen to understand the other (Weissglass, 1990). Constructivist listening is a tool for constructing new meanings, building community, and developing agency. Student reflections capture this change.

> "It sometimes reminds me how crazy it is that our tribe members used to be strangers before this semester started, but through [dialogue in] this class, we came to have bonds to rethink our biased culture and transform it into something very new and hopeful."

> "If I want to understand where race and gender, or race and age, or gender and class, intersect, I need to make it personal. If I want to feel enraged and motivated to take action, I need to personalize it···Being part of the solution means exactly this, to personalize and then put into practice the learning from this class, and understand that

change starts now, it starts where I am, and it starts with me."

Student experiences reflect how the process of GCE is a process of understanding, cultivating, and transforming one's social agency (Bajaj and Vlad, 2018; Torres, 2008). When female students found themselves in positions to share their voice, questions, and new knowledge, the emergence of student agency was palpable.

These three teaching strategies of *reconceptualizing power*, *integrating lived narratives*, and *dyadic dialogue* illustrate the CP principles of practice, and through student reflections brought to life the aspects of critical GCE that serve to capture female students' authentic self. Ellsworth (1989) identifies the importance of students making themselves visible and "defining themselves as authors of their own world" (p. 309). The purpose of engaging and reflecting was not to place students as carriers of knowledge to inform others, rather it was a process of discovery, of pushing back, a speech of resistance. As noted by hooks (1986) "… true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power, it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges the politics of domination that would render us nameless and voiceless …it is a courageous act" (p. 126). As students looked forward to a future course of action, their reflections spoke of a strengthening commitment.

Conclusion

The odyssey of GCE is at a crossroads, evolving from a western, male-centric perspective to an approach that is integrating and elevating women's voices and experiences. A critical pedagogy approach to GCE is a pathway for praxis, connecting theory to action. By situating *critical* GCE at the center, however, presents a quagmire for GCE in universities that have typically championed a *soft* GCE approach that is more closely aligned with a neoliberal, male-dominated view.

The three teaching strategies presented in this case study, *reconceptualizing power*, *integrating lived narratives*, and *dyadic dialogue,* reflect that it is possible to create another world where all voices and lives count (Armbruster-Sandoval, 2005), when included by design.

In higher education, a critical pedagogy approach requires weighing the risks and benefits of speaking up and speaking out. As Ellsworth (1989) poignantly reminds us, "Acting as if our classroom were a safe space in which democratic dialogue was possible and happening did not make it so" (p. 315). Teaching and learning practices are needed that confront the

power dynamics in university systems and structures; questioning whose voice is missing, whose voice is being silenced, and what is the purpose of GCE. To close with the words of bell hooks (1994), "…it takes a fierce commitment, a will to struggle, to let our work…reflect progressive pedagogies" (p. 143). I would add that it will take the fierce commitment of *all* students, willing to struggle, to live a practice of *critical* GCE. This struggle is both individual and collective based on a harmony of interests as well as on the diversity of strengths. Critical GCE is at a crossroads. It is time to reimagine the academy as a place for building community based on deep trust and commitment to a more inclusive world.

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