Research Article

Towards the Transformative Role of Global Citizenship Education Experiences in Higher Education: Crossing Students' and Teachers' Views

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Abstract

This work analyzes the transformative learning potential of global citizenship education (GCE) in academia. This is done by examining *learning conditions, processes, and outcomes* and is then followed by a reflection on the opportunity to link transformative learning (TL) and GCE. Students' views were collected through focus groups with 72 students and interviews with seven teachers. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis informed by TL theory and critical GCE. We suggest that the experiences studied offer important opportunities for potentially transformative learning; however, there is a need for more emphasis on linking GCE and TL, and on the narratives and conditions for "transformation."

Keywords

global citizenship education, higher education, transformative education, transformative learning, Portugal

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Global citizenship education (GCE) aims to promote democracy and social justice, and a sense of global belonging, awareness, and action (Bourn, 2015). Over the last 60 years, GCE evolved from informative toward more transformative perspectives. Freire (1972, 1999) was decisive in this shift, proposing notions such as "conscientization," critical social justice, or solidarity. Social and personal transformation became expected "outcomes" in policies and formal and non-formal practices.

In academia, GCE adopts different approaches, assumptions, and aims regarding transformation (Aktas et al., 2017; Stein & Andreotti, 2016). The complexity of GCE, requiring systemic and collective change, is challenging. Examples include the disciplinary organization (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015), the existence of more "inward-oriented" logics (Bamber et al., 2018, p. 207), or the increased neoliberalism often pulling institutions to pursue students' satisfaction over making them handle uncomfortable topics. This weakens academia's global, social, and public responsibility (Menezes et al., 2018).

Despite being ubiquitous in GCE, "transformation" is often rhetorical or loosely formulated rather than clearly theorized. Little is known on the "transformative dimension" of GCE (Bamber et al., 2018), and the use of transformative learning theory as an analytical tool for GCE is underexplored (see Academic Network on Global Education & Learning, 2020). Such use could be, we argue, especially productive as transformative learning can provide an analytical structure to the poorly known transformative potential of GCE, while critical GCE can strengthen socio-contextual dimensions of TL.

This article analyzes the transformative learning potential of GCE in academia by examining *learning conditions, processes, and outcomes*, based on research conducted in Portugal. Adopting the perspectives of Freire, Mezirow, and authors furthering their contribution, most notably, the work of Hoggan, we reflect on the link between TL and GCE. We suggest that the experiences studied offer learning opportunities that are potentially transformative. We start by overviewing the relevance of critical GCE, followed by a reflection on GCE and/as TL and then present the methodology and findings, and finally the discussion.

On the Relevance of Critical Global Citizenship Education

The concern with a global outlook in education has been debated for decades (Bourn, 2015), yet GCE gained more visibility since the recent endorsement by UNESCO (2015). Approaches and pedagogies of GCE are diverse, depending on the education providers (e.g., schools, civil society organizations), and on the traditions to which GCE is related locally (e.g., civic education, development education).

In Portugal, as in other European countries (Coelho et al., 2019), the adoption of GCE in academia is often linked to the work of NGOs in development education. This consists mostly of at-home, non-formal and formal education activities, advocacy, and campaigning for raising citizens' awareness of global development issues. In academia,

GCE ranges from the internationalization of curricula to training and local and international service learning (Aktas et al., 2017). GCE approaches common in other contexts, such as international and global service learning (Kiely & Hartman, 2015), are less so in Europe. Despite its increased popularity in education, this is still a new subject to GCE and higher education institutions (HEIs) in many European countries (Aramburuzabala & Lázaro, 2020).

GCE is highly plural in terms of worldviews, assumptions, and strategies. For instance, donations to "Global South" countries or training about global problems informed by postcolonial thinking can be framed under the GCE umbrella. As a result, GCE can easily range between charity or (neo)liberal and critical standpoints, all of which also imply diverse questionings and perspectives on personal and social transformation (Bourn, 2015). This also includes HEIs, where "global citizenship" can be captured for marketing purposes and is less often taken as an opportunity to promote social justice (Stein & Andreotti, 2016). Andreotti (2016) illustrates the plurality of GCE, identifying three discourses. *Neoliberal* GCE concentrates on issues like "market interdependence, global skills, employability," preparing global leaders for the global market. *Humanist* GCE is focused on human rights, sustainable development, and equality for all, fostering individual skills to deal with diversity, inclusion, and "making a difference" in world problems (pp. 202–203). *Critical* or *postcolonial* GCE relates to the "roots of inequalities, solidarity, difference, openness, relationality, self-reflexivity," to unveil structural oppressions and create alternative modes of living and relating collectively that require "unlearning privilege and imagin[ing] otherwise" (pp. 202–203).

Global Citizenship Education and/as Transformative Learning

Global citizenship education and transformative learning are "umbrella terms" for diverse meanings and practices, yet are often viewed as intrinsically positive (Andreotti, 2016; Hoggan, 2016). The main criticisms[1] of both fields relate to their "enlightenment" underpinnings, among them the focus on individual over social change and consequently their limited social, collective impact (Coelho et al., 2021; Hoggan et al., 2017). In both, learning "outcomes" can be lengthy and difficult to identify and thus seeking a "caterpillar-to-butterfly" change (Hoggan & Kloubert, 2020, p. 302) is a narrow interpretation of their aims. These fields are challenging on a personal level because they imply epistemological and ontological changes (Martin & Griffiths, 2014), demanding educators' and learners' willingness to reflect, professionally and personally. This can imply the need to "un-learn" problematic imaginaries (e.g., picturing "Global South" countries as less capable; Andreotti, 2016). They are potentially disruptive on institutional and collective levels as they convey rethinking institutions and modes of living (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015).

The use of TL theory is still underexplored in GCE and little is known on its "transformative dimension" (Bamber et al., 2018), including in higher education. Robinson and Levac (2018) analyzed students' experiences in a course about privilege

and oppression. Authors found changes in "philosophical, psychological, epistemic, and moral-ethical habits of mind (…) understandings of personal and systemic privilege and oppression." (p. 109). Clifford and Montgomery (2015) conducted an international study with academic teachers and leaders on the internationalization of the curriculum. Despite identifying TL as a means of "empowering students to become agents of change in their own lives and in society" (p. 52), participants considered that TL is rarely applied, as it significantly challenges the institutional, course, pedagogical, and personal levels. Bamber (2015) analyzed students' experiences in an international academic service-learning program in Global South countries, assuming it as transformative and cosmopolitan learning. Bamber analyzes processes, dispositions, and conditions in "becoming other-wise" (p. 32), and its postcolonial implications.

Methodology

Methods

We analyzed five GCE experiences through eight focus groups with students (n = 72) and in-depth interviews with teachers (n = 7) in HEIs in Portugal (2018/2019). The selection of experiences was informed by previous research about GCE courses in higher education in the country (e.g., Coelho, 2019), giving prominence to i) courses which are part of the core curriculum; and ii) institutional and geographic diversity. Four are mandatory one-semester courses in the initial years of bachelor and master's courses in teacher training, education, and social intervention. The courses were "structured experiences" (Bamber et al., 2018, p. 218), as they aimed to stimulate students' engagement with global issues. The experiences studied mostly consisted of classroom activities (e.g., videos, debates, roleplaying, written exercises, case analysis) and two of them also included invited guests (e.g., from NGOs) or participation in extracurricular activities at their own institutions (e.g., conferences). Although content and orientation vary, courses included classic topics, such as human rights, inequalities, and active citizenship (Bourn, 2015). The fifth experience consists of two workshops with higher education teacher trainers promoting GCE in their practice, for approximately three months. Workshops were conducted by an NGO educator based on peer sharing (e.g., pedagogical practices) and focused on planning a project on environmental awareness with institutional reach.

The group of students was mostly comprised by women (56 out of 72) of 19–22 years of age (75%). Researchers used photo elicitation, bringing researcher-generated images related to the topic of study to generate the discussion and access "participant beliefs and values, and to highlight participant voices through their choices" (Richard & Lahman, 2015, p. 4). Students were asked to select one image they considered to be connected to the course and explain why to reach views on i) the experience in the GCE course attended (prior knowledge of GCE, aspects most valued in the experience, what to keep and change in a future course); and ii) the connection between the GCE course and future work.

Regarding the interviewees, six are higher education teachers and one is an NGO educator facilitating GCE in academia. The majority are aged 50 or over, with a background in social sciences and humanities. The interviews collected data on the background, pedagogical choices, relevance, difficulties, and learnings from the implementation of the GCE experiences. Written consent was obtained from students and teachers before data collection and anonymity was ensured.

Concerning data analysis, we started with a general review using "thematic analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify core issues (themes) informed by critical GCE. Given the predominance of the term or idea of "transformation," a second analysis was based on TL theory. The sample's reach and the sole use of self-report methods to "reconstruct" the experiences (Bamber et al., 2018) are limitations to this work.

Transformative Learning Analysis

Transformative learning is understood here as significant changes connected to educational experiences, "in the way a person experiences, conceptualizes, and interacts with the world" (Hoggan, 2016, p. 71). For reflecting on the transformative potential of GCE experiences, the analysis addresses TL *conditions*, *processes,* and *outcomes* (Hoggan, 2016; Hoggan & Kloubert, 2020; Mezirow, 2003, 2006; Taylor, 2007).

Learning *conditions* are individual or contextual factors that allow TL to occur (Hoggan & Kloubert, 2020; Taylor, 2007), here highlighted in italics. These include the concrete *context* in which learning takes place, concerning individuals (e.g., prior life experiences) and settings (e.g., time, historical events). Authors also stress the importance of creating *trustful and supportive relationships*, that set the ground for *dialogue* as well as the opportunities for *critical reflection*. Setting such safe spaces (e.g., empathy) is indispensable for learners enacting meanings together and experience democratic participation (Mezirow, 2003, 2006). Besides these factors, experiencing diversity is also key. This can be achieved by adopting diversified pedagogical strategies (a *varied medium,* according to Taylor [2007]), as well as by promoting *direct and active learning experiences,* namely, *beyond formal settings* (Aboytes & Barth, 2020, p. 1001).

Learning *processes* are the ways in which learning occurs and include *disorienting dilemmas*, *critical (self-)reflection*, *critical dialogue*, or *action*. A *disorienting dilemma* occurs when, intentionally or not, "experiences contradict people's mental frameworks for understanding themselves and the world" (Hoggan, 2016, p. 61). *Critical (self-) reflection* includes awareness and understanding of feelings, beliefs, and assumptions, essential steps for *critical dialogue* or *critical-dialectical discourse* (Mezirow, 2003). Dialogic processes allow them to be placed on common ground and produce new meanings collectively. *Action* processes are varied and relate to experimenting new roles, developing competences, or "planning a course of action" (Mezirow, 2006, p. 28).

Learning *outcomes* refer to types of changes or effects of learning experiences. Our analysis draws inspiration from Hoggan's (2016) metatheoretical typology, composed

by six categories: *worldview*, *self*, *epistemology*, *ontology*, *behavior*, and *capacity*. *Worldview* comprises "significant changes in the ways the learner understands the world and how it works" (p. 65). It includes changing *assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, expectations*, *ways of interpreting experience,* and gaining a *more comprehensive or complex worldview*, or a *new awareness* or *understanding*. Worldview echoes Freire's reading of the world (Freire & Macedo, 2005), although Freire's (1999) process of conscientization goes beyond unveiling reality, as it implies reading and transforming that same reality. *Self* refers to changes perceived in the "sense of self" and ranges from more social (*self-in-relation*), to psychological (*empowerment-responsibility*; *identity-view of self*) and biographical (*self-knowledge*; *personal narratives; meaning-purpose; personality change*) aspects. *Epistemology* relates to tacit forms of knowing and building knowledge. Changes include becoming *more discriminating* (in the sense of critical assessment), *more open* or *utilizing extrarational ways of knowing. Ontology* includes an *affective experience of life*, changes in *ways of being*, and the development of new *attributes*. *Behavior* refers to *actions consistent with the new perspective*, to its translation into *social action* (e.g., promoting democracy) or *professional practice*, and the development of new *skills*. *Capacity* includes profound changes in personal capabilities, such as *cognitive development*, *consciousness*, and *spirituality.*

Findings

Learning conditions

Students' and teachers' views suggest these GCE experiences were "safe spaces" through which they gained an increased awareness of global issues and of their own and their colleagues' thinking. Fostering openness to questioning personal habits of mind is a key aspect for TL (Mezirow, 2003, 2006) and for critical GCE (Martin & Griffiths, 2014). The constitutive role that critical thinking plays in GCE and preparing students to be global citizens was voiced by all teachers and was one of the main reasons for offering these courses. Providing opportunities, *time and space for critical reflection and discourse* (Taylor, 2007), and for engaging in meaningful *dialogues* were also key in gaining awareness of students' own perspectives and actions, particularly those suggesting more problematic frames. As Lúcia, a teacher, notes, speaking of the importance of empathy, it is vital to provide students with the "opportunities to think and discuss their ideas (…) [as] many of our behaviors and stereotypes have to do with the fact that we never thought about it. We learned 'that' way and 'that' is the norm." These experiences are described as envisioning supporting students to become "critically self-reflective" (Mezirow, 2003, 2006), linked to an idea of coding (and subsequent decoding) of an existential situation, as posed by Freire (1972). Students acknowledged and valued these dialogic "safe spaces," recognizing them as more engaging (and rare) in academia, namely, for the *trustful and supportive relationships* experienced (Taylor, 2007). This dialogic perspective is vital for "political understandings and meaning making" (Hoggan & Kloubert, 2020, p. 303). When asked

about significant elements to be kept in future courses, students often said "the teacher," noting the encouraging and open environment generated, as in the dialogue:

> Laura: ... the teacher, definitely! (…)
>
> Lisa: Even in debates (…) here we can always share our view, others have theirs, it might be different, but we are not being judged in advance (…). This teacher gives us the opportunity to choose and say what is wrong and right [with the course]. I don't think we have any other teacher like that. (FG1)

The same is evident in teachers' accounts. For instance, Júlia encouraged students to self-reflect about the meaning of activities performed in class and the importance of doing so "in deep solidarity with colleagues." Tânia, an educator, described how the relational dimension of GCE was key in generating an open environment, vital for learners expressing "opinions and disagreement" and making sense of GCE in their contexts. The concern with nurturing the human dimension is consistent with findings from previous research that suggest that practitioners understand GCE as highly relational (Coelho et al., 2018), and with Freire's (1972) assumption that education is always a collective process.

Another element highlighted by students was the diversified pedagogical strategies and resources used, Taylor's (2007) *varied medium*. This raised students' interest, stimulating them to develop their own thinking about the subjects addressed. The decision for diversity is embedded in a wider perspective of transformation in practice, as suggested by the option of the teacher Catarina to do "practical exercises in all sessions, because the goal is also for students to learn by practicing." As the students interviewed will be future educators (in a broad sense), these are also rich opportunities to "practice" contents and methods. Former research with global educators found this consistency between "shape" and "content" to be central in transformative perspectives (Coelho, 2019). This also connects to students' reports on how the courses provided them with *direct and active learning experiences* (Taylor, 2007) and how this links to a broader democratic culture. Students valued the use of pedagogical strategies that, as well as being diversified, allowed active participation and contact with different opinions. Judite (FG2) notes: "unlike other classes, here [in this class] we can participate more, express our opinion (…) and that is a way of promoting our participation in society and our critical standpoint, but also understanding what others think and learning from them".

Offering a participatory and democratic environment was a strategic decision made by teachers, in line with Mezirow's (2003) *optimal conditions for discourse*. This democratic orientation is also central for Freire (1972, 1999) and has been influential in the emergence of critical GCE (Bourn, 2015). Teachers understand that such an environment is key to fostering critical thinking, to engage students in decisions regarding their learning, and to create an empathic stance toward others (as noted above). Some teachers considered that the lack of a democratic culture in higher education hinders

students' participation in pedagogical decisions and, by extension, in a broader democratic culture.

Although the courses were not strictly theoretical and encouraged participation, students nevertheless argued that future courses should include a more practical and participatory dimension. This was often expressed by suggesting the inclusion of *educational experiences beyond formal settings* (Aboytes & Barth, 2020). This was also evident in students' description of what it means to be a global citizen and was connected to an attempt to make meaning of issues discussed in the classroom by experiencing them "first-hand." Such an experience is expected to close the gap between "theory" and "practice" (e.g., "if we are speaking of plastic: take us to a beach to help clean it," Denise, FG6, suggested). It is also expected to work as a catalyst for engagement, as it is clear to students that knowing about global issues (e.g., climate change) does not necessarily lead to a corresponding action toward them—or to personal and social change. As Teresa (FG5) noted: "we can be aware of what we should do and improve, but in practice, we do little or nothing." Several students noted that only those directly affected by issues will act on them, and therefore educational experiences beyond formal settings are expected to make issues more "personal." In students' views, educational experiences beyond the classroom would bring "thinking" and "action" closer, make global issues more relatable, and offer a platform for their impulse to "make a difference" as an individual, through local engagement or international volunteering, mentioned by several students. This quest for personal engagement sparks the debate on the "dichotomy between representational 'textbook' knowing, and ontological 'other' encounters" (Bamber et al., 2018, p. 213). It also suggests the weight of emotions in TL processes (Taylor, 2007) connected to GCE.

Learning Processes

Learning conditions are suggestive of processes of *critical (self-)reflection* and *critical dialogue* and thereby we focus here on *disorienting dilemmas* and *action* (Hoggan, 2016; Mezirow, 2006). Students seem to have experienced *disorienting dilemmas* in the scope of the learning experiences or as a result of them, connected to what it means to be a "global citizen" and what is expected of one. One common expression of disruption was the awareness that lifestyle choices (e.g., consumption) can be connected to human rights violations (e.g., labor rights), and the difficulty of handling such "heavy" knowledge and acting accordingly:

> It's complex and a little antagonistic (…). What is a global citizen supposed to know? No one can really tell what is needed and not. (…) So, the global citizen is someone that, supposedly, must understand all this [e.g., implications of garment industry], but has no means to reach it all. I think that it's kind of a dilemma because one is aware that 'it's bad to purchase this' (…) but then… what's easier? Harder? Living a life completely aware of what surrounds us is tiring. (Tatiana, FG8)

The difficulty in making personal changes to act otherwise is evident, suggesting that the tension between awareness and action is always present in GCE. This (apparent) permanent dialectic between practice and theory, reflection (and awareness) and action, echoes the importance of Freire's (1999) "conscientization" in the scope of critical GCE. Whether manifest or not, *disorienting dilemmas* are, we argue, constitutive of critical GCE. Understanding and feeling responsible for the global impact of local actions and making meaning of such complex contents are overwhelming and this was quite clear in this study (see Caramelo et al., 2020). For critical GCE, this discomfort is constitutive of learning experiences, like TL, where disruptive potential and "unpleasant emotions" are part of perspective transformation (Hoggan et al., 2017, p. 55). However, we see the risk that GCE may be successful at "displaying" problems, triggering discomfort (e.g., guilt) and the need for transformation, but may fail in assisting learners through such potentially disruptive processes. This is especially concerning because the transformations deemed as necessary (both personal and social) require significant questioning and reframing modes of knowing and interacting with others and the world (Andreotti, 2016). Moreover, formal and non-formal providers of GCE often lack the means (human, material, time) to operate on such complexity, leading us back to the debate on learning conditions.

Findings suggest that *action*, via experimenting with new roles and developing competences for future work, was a key process for teachers and students. Teachers made a sustained effort to connect courses to students' situation as future educators. This was done by simulating activities in real-life contexts and developing new competences (e.g., preparing pedagogical activities for schools). Ana, one of the teachers, suggested that GCE in academia should engage with experiential pedagogies, particularly service learning. Helping students make meaning of GCE themes was a common concern, stimulating students to imagine how they would handle issues in practice as future professionals. This clear and sustained coordination with their professional future was highlighted by students in all discussion groups as an important aspect, and in some cases was connected to a sense of professional responsibility for educating others to become aware of global issues.

Learning Outcomes

Teachers and students reported some effects related to these experiences, which can be interpreted as potentially transformative according to Hoggan's (2016) typology. Most teachers considered that the courses impacted the students' *worldview*, namely, by raising *new awareness* or *new understanding* of global issues. This relates to accessing new content and gaining different perspectives on issues discussed. Focus group discussions with students suggest they gained an improved awareness and that, for some, the courses helped develop a *more comprehensive or complex worldview*. Students' accounts suggest an improved understanding of the local-global dialectic, "that a small local action can lead to world visibility, to a world action" (João, FG2), and the development of critical insight regarding global citizenship issues:

> In our classes, we often said that the Declaration [of Human Rights] exists and is universal, but many rights are not yet accomplished. (…) To what extent is it respected in all countries? Are there any sanctions for countries not abiding by it? Who can have a say on who is abiding or not? (…) there is still a long way to go for the rights to become effective, I guess. (Irene, FG6)

Students were aware that change is complex, takes time, and demands collective action, and besides more practice, their main suggestion for a future course was "more time," highlighting the importance of context in TL (Taylor, 2007). The acknowledgment of complexity, however, contrasted with a certain linearity found in thinking-to-action and individual-to-collective rationales (Coelho, 2019). Moreover, they often suggested individual and "simplistic solutions" to global problems, such as recycling, reducing consumption, or volunteering (Caramelo et al., 2020).

Our data also suggests the existence of potential outcomes at the level of *behavior*. They particularly concern disposition for action on *professional practices,* connecting learning acquired on the course with their future roles. We emphasize the word "disposition" here, as students referred to prospective professional practice. In another example, the teacher Natália considers that this experience contributed to increased awareness among her teacher colleagues of including a GCE perspective in their practice. The reference to *actions consistent with new perspective* is another aspect of a *behavior* outcome voiced by students and teachers. This was expressed via a growing disposition toward *action engagement*, as when the student Miguel (FG7) mentions that "debating all these themes ignited a spark, I guess, to do something."

Discussion

Toward the Transformative Potential of Global Citizenship Education Experiences in Higher Education

Adopting TL theory's categories and terms to read students and teachers views about GCE academic experiences allowed for more complex understanding of aspects of transformation in the scope of these experiences. Our analysis suggests the learning experiences studied were potentially transformative on a personal level and in experiencing academia "differently." Findings illustrate that pedagogical decisions matter, as the learning conditions, processes, and outcomes that teachers aimed to promote were also often evoked by students as the most significant features. Data suggests an increased awareness and critical thinking (understanding world issues, other realities, others' views…) following participation in these GCE experiences. The fact that participatory and open contexts were created, where students felt their voice and action were valued, is among the reasons they considered GCE courses distinctive. However, further debate and/or research is needed on the understandings and conditions for social and personal transformation, considering both students and educators.

First, there is a need for a more thorough debate on the different types and "levels of change" (Bourn, 2015, p. 96), which GCE aims at and can generate, beyond general claims of globally oriented social and personal transformation. This debate should also consider how different "expectations" can occur and be handled. In fact, our data suggests a tension between students longing for a clearer "script" of the actions and changes necessary for handling GCE issues, and educators' more "open-ended" stance and avoidance of indoctrination and prescription of specific courses of change (Bourn, 2015; Hoggan & Kloubert, 2020). We argue that the debate on transformation cannot be conducted in a contextual and ideological void but must engage with educators' positionality and standpoint regarding GCE's plurality (Andreotti, 2016) and the changes it (in)directly conveys. Whether or not global educators are aware of their assumptions, beliefs, and decisions in relation to this, these elements are likely to play a substantive role in their practice (see Kiely & Hartman, 2015 for global service learning; and Hoggan et al., 2017 for TL).

Second, data also points to the importance of paying more attention to the role of *prior learning* and the *readiness* for TL (Mezirow, 2006), not only by students but also by teachers. Literature suggests students' "pre-understandings" about global issues matter (Bamber et al., 2018), as well as the personal and professional experiences of educators delivering formal and non-formal GCE (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015; Coelho et al., 2018). In our study, a sense of self-reflection and improvement for future experiences emerged in nearly all interviews with teachers. Specialized teacher training was mentioned by teachers and students as one of the most important factors to improve GCE experiences in academia. However, this contrasts with the current situation where, given the lack of specific training for staff in many contexts (Portugal included), most educators learn GCE "on the job" (Coelho, 2019). This means educators too are "active" learners during their practice, and this additional "layer" needs to be considered as well in promoting TL conditions, processes, and outcomes (see, e.g., Clifford & Montgomery, 2015 for similar reflection).

Finally, GCE experiences analyzed seem to have impacted students' *worldview* (Hoggan, 2016) and triggered their need for a stronger connection to the "real world." Most of the experiences took place in classroom settings, suggesting that students do not perceive them as "real world." This opens important questioning regarding *learning processes* connected to *worldview* and *action engagement*. What are the implications of including a "practical" dimension in such short-span experiences and how can this be balanced with the "reflexive" dimension? To what extent is such action, expected in both GCE and TL, considering problematic patterns of engagement toward (global) others, such as paternalism or ethnocentrism (Martin & Griffiths, 2014)? How can "real world" GCE counteract the narrative of individual actions being the solution for social issues and reinforce GCE's political and emancipatory dimension?

Concluding Remarks and Future Directions

This work applied transformative learning theory to an emergent form of citizenship education aimed at raising awareness of global issues and fostering personal and social change. We analyzed the transformative potential of GCE experiences in academia by looking at learning conditions, processes, and outcomes, and crossing educators' and students' views. We considered the experience of participating in GCE to be potentially transformative for students at personal and academic experience levels. We argued that more reflection is needed about "transformation," a ubiquitous term in GCE, on understanding teachers as GCE learners themselves, and on the implications of "real world" action. Future studies would benefit from analyzing them in detail and considering the intertwining of personal, pedagogical, institutional, and local community contexts. Systematic research on what students and teachers see as learning outcomes from these experiences is also a point for future studies to complement these initial results.

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Note

1. Literature on the limits of TL is wide and beyond this work. It often refers to Jack Mezirow's theory of *perspective transformation*, mixing "theory and common usage of the theory in practice" (Hoggan & Kloubert, 2020, p. 296). For an alternative discussion, see Hoggan et al. (2017).

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