Teacher Readiness in English-Medium Education to Mediate Global Citizenship

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Abstract

English-Medium Education (EME) lends itself to the promotion of a more intercultural, equitable and inclusive education; yet there is still much to be done to prepare students and teaching staff for the global challenges of today's world. This article argues that the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a meaningful and relevant foundation for enhancing quality in higher education (HE). More specifically, it will probe teachers' preparedness to act on the concepts of "global engagement" (GE) and "cultures of teaching and learning" in their classrooms as a result of their participation in a teacher education program. Findings shed light on teachers' status quo, teaching practices, and challenges and future directions regarding these two concepts. Finally, implications for teachers' Continuous Professional Development are suggested.

Introduction

English-Medium Education (EME) has presented us with the opportunity to foster intercultural dialogue and thus create more inclusive and equitable teaching spaces when it has been carried out responsibly (Author, 2020). English is now increasingly used as a lingua franca in university settings (Dafouz-Milne & Smit, 2020), and through the decolonisation of the English language, it has been possible for more voices to be heard (Kamanzi, 2016). In spite of the transformational approaches and goals that have characterised EME in the twenty-first century (e.g., multilingualism, internationalisation and academic mobility), much still needs to be done to improve quality (Studer, 2018; Marinoni, 2019). EME is not the only aspect that is in focus, however, and the relevance and ability of university teaching and learning to face global challenges is also being questioned (François, 2017). To address this concern, the United Nations (2015) issued a call through its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to bring transformative learning (UNESCO, 2017) to life by tackling, among other issues:

1) Inclusive and equitable quality education.

2) Maximizing human potential, dignity, equality and health.

These issues need to be leveraged explicitly in all learning contexts and educational stages, among which are multilingual and multicultural HE learning spaces. This call has also been echoed in the Internationalisation of Higher Education (IHE), where there is a shift in focus from teaching in English and mobility towards sustainable education and global citizenship (Hanson, 2010). This implies questioning what we do in university education that can be further leveraged to develop transformational quality education that is inclusive and equitable for all (Jellinek, 2018). To this end, it is important to focus on university teachers' development and readiness for this shift in English-medium settings. This chapter explores teachers' readiness to act upon the concepts of "GE" (reinforcing respect for pluralism and the interdependence

between peoples and societies) and "cultures of teaching and learning" (the ethnic, local, disciplinary and academic cultures that affect the classroom), both tightly related to delivering quality education and closing the equality gap. This qualitative exploration follows the teachers' participation in a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course.

Continuous Professional Development for IHE

As universities across Europe continue to form transnational alliances (Sursock, 2015), the role of university teaching staff is changing, as are the expectations of them in preparing students to make a meaningful contribution to society (de Wit et al., 2015). Teachers will need to reflect on their pedagogy and teaching practices – not only what, but also how they are teaching – to successfully infuse curricula with the SDGs and develop the next generation of problem solvers (Block et al., 2019). This means developing students' capacity for critical engagement with the pressing issues of our time, which signals a dire need for CPD to prepare university teachers – as inducers of social and cultural change – for the challenges ahead.

CPD today should therefore aim to develop teachers who are open to multiple ways of knowing and unknowing, as an appreciation of what interdependence and mutual understanding might entail. Moving away from the accepted decade-old pedagogical frameworks, educational developers, who train university teachers, will need to examine epistemic virtues – openness, curiosity, humility – to sharpen their ability to take unprecedented risks (Rizvi, 2008). Flexible pedagogies and new approaches to assess students' capabilities, values and knowledges will need to be part of ongoing experiential learning for teachers and their trainers (Boud et al., 2007). To that effect, virtual Communities of Practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998), where members exchange attitudes, practices, and values (Coryell et al., 2014), are proving to be especially valuable and

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effective given their flexible nature in response to the needs of its members (Kimble & Hildreth, 2008).

Theoretical Considerations

While it is important that universities and other HE institutions continue to promote the development of academic and professional skills, additional fundamental needs for interculturally agile graduates have emerged in the era of globalization. Universities need to "educate their students for global citizenship, to keep pace with their peers, to better serve the national and international community" (Biddle, 2002, p. 7) and "produce global competence, or a sense of civic responsibility that extends beyond the local or even national level" (Rumbley et al., 2012, p. 15). On the individual level, global (intercultural) competence goes hand in hand with employability on the international job market, along with increased job performance and personal development (Deardorff et al., 2012). To ensure that global citizenship has a place in the curriculum and the classroom, teachers need to deepen their knowledge and acquire the skills to address it in their subjects.

Another equally important fundamental need is for teachers to develop a fuller understanding of the cultures that shape their practice and that may help, or obstruct, students' learning. The four aspects of culture to consider in teaching and learning (Westerholm & Räsänen, 2015) are: (1) ethnic culture, which relates to the cultural backgrounds, the values and the experiences of both teachers and students; (2) local culture, which is drawn on to explain and understand abstract concepts, or to negotiate expected communication conventions; (3) disciplinary culture, where each area of study has its traditions, theoretical frameworks and nomenclatures; and finally (4) academic culture, represented in the expectations of teacher and student roles in academia. Both 'the cultures of teaching and learning' and 'GE' are entrenched in EME, as explained in the following two sections.

The Link Between EME and Global Engagement

EME and GE overlap through their shared focus on a holistic approach to education and the systems in which it operates. Although there is no set definition for "GE", it is understood to mean a committed and meaningful interaction with the world as a whole (Båge et al., 2020). It places emphasis on addressing and becoming aware of one's own language use, values and perspectives, as well as the emphasis on participatory pedagogies, aligned for the purpose of including, valuing and learning from many different perspectives (UNESCO, 2017).The term engagement highlights the fact that to be prepared to live responsibly in this current and future world, education must also include agency, not just fleeting exposure, to multiple perspectives on local and global challenges – recommendations aligned with the intended outcomes of Content and Language Integrated Learning (Rubió-Alcalá & Coyle, 2021).

The Link Between EME and Cultures of Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning opportunities attributed to IHE have also reinforced certain inequalities across academic communities seen, for example, in the unidirectional mobility from some parts of the world to another to invest in an 'international' education (Author, 2020). The preparedness of the agents overseeing education (teachers and curriculum designers) in host universities plays an important role in subduing some of these inequalities (and vice versa). For example, teachers should facilitate learning to all students, the local and the hosted, and make knowledge equally accessible to them. Failing to make necessary (in)formal changes in course objectives, materials, assessments, and modes of instruction jeopardizes the benefits of being in a culturally diverse context and instead fosters a space of educational inequality (Leask, 2015).

As previously mentioned, the interplay between the ethnic, local, academic and disciplinary dimensions (Westerholm & Räsänen, 2015) of culture influences many of the decisions that teachers take. They are responsible for presuppositions about the pathways students must take in order to learn 'the ways of the discipline' and to become worthy of gaining membership in their disciplines of choice. Teachers often deliver the content of their courses, assuming all students share the same academic values and standards by default, irrespective of their previous home academic cultures, belief systems, the extent of their know-what and know-how. Chen (2010) surveyed a group of Chinese students' academic expectations when studying in an Australian university. Their previous academic experiences had naturally shaped their expectations of teacher and student roles. Coming from a context that values examination performance and fixed knowledge codes (with explicit procedures and emphasis on skills and specialised knowledge), the students expected their teachers to guide them in similar ways; however, the teachers had other beliefs about teaching and learning. They expected students to discuss, explore, co-construct experiences and self-evaluate. These cultural expectations, among others, need to be brought to both the teachers' and to the students' attention for more inclusion and equity.

Methodology

Context and Participants

One way to approach the CPD of university teachers is through online transnational collaboration to prepare teachers for the demands of teaching in multilingual and multicultural classrooms (Author & Other, YEAR), which is the context of this study. The data was gathered from teachers in training in 11 different higher education institutions spread over 6 different countries in Europe, intended for those who wish to gain intercultural awareness for teaching the glocal classroom and develop different teaching skills for this purpose, both pedagogical and

linguistic. Teachers in this course are paired in online tandems that provide them with a variety of opportunities to reflect on such themes as English as Lingua Franca (ELF), cultures of teaching and learning, and GE, alongside practical teaching skills needed for the international classroom. These concepts, which were fairly new to most of the participating teachers, were introduced in the form of awareness-raising activities.

The course, developed through research-based evidence for best practice fit for twenty-first century classrooms, takes place online, and each tandem is facilitated by an educational developer is a virtual CoP whose participants (Table 1) come from a wide EME community with varied forms and degrees of teaching experiences. Together, they exchange views and experiences as they gain more awareness about topical and innovative educational themes.

Table 1

Course participants

Institution Code	Discipline
MA	Psychology
AA	Civil Engineering
MW	Communication & Cooperation
SB	Computer Science
KB	International Marketing
AC	Chemistry
AR	Textiles
BE	Materials Science
EE	Healthcare improvement
SG	Digital Journalism
MHG	Quality
VG	Electrical engineering
MG	Neuroscience/ Psychobiology

CG	Operations Strategy
DG	Information Literacy
KG	International education
LH	Social work
MM	Math and Physics
CP	Sports Science
JR	Mathematics
CS	Architecture
VT	General Pathology
AV	Psychology

Data collection and analysis

The teachers were introduced through short readings and tandem discussions to ethnic, local, disciplinary and academic cultural aspects of teaching and learning (Westerholm & Räsänen, 2015), including value systems in academic cultures for the latter aspect (Lauridsen & Cozart, 2015). In a similar fashion, they were introduced to the meaning of sustainable development and GE through audiovisual resources (United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2017) to familiarize them with these notions and spark discussions. The data is composed of the teachers' written reflections about these two topics, 'cultures of teaching and learning' and 'GE', which they reflected on individually after the tandem discussions. A set of conversation starters were posted to help prompt these discussions, after which the teachers posted their answers in writing, commented on others' posts and finally summed the totality of their understanding, opinions and decisions through personal reflections. Excluding restatements of definitions and explanations from the input materials (readings and videos), the descriptions, opinions and decisions that

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emerged in the teachers' reflections are seen here as non-arbitrary themes that represent 'topic or dimension control'; i.e., components of the training upon which they show readiness to act (see Fairclough, 1992, p. 138). 'Acting' here ranges from examinations they provided of their current environment (university, class, teaching practice or learners' habits) to expressing opinions or foreseen challenges.

Results and Discussion

This section of the article will introduce university teachers' opinions and experiences regarding, firstly, GE and, secondly, cultures of teaching and learning. Both findings will be articulated around three main themes: (1) status quo – *where are teachers now?*, (2) teaching practices – *how do teachers put it into practice?*, and (3) challenges and future directions – *where to go next?*, and teachers' own voices will be provided as illustrative examples[1].

Global Engagement

Where are teachers now?

Having resorted to scholarship about the concept of GE and having discussed it with other colleagues has proven to be an eye-opening experience for the teachers participating in this course. All of them acknowledge the value of GE in today's world, although to varying degrees that could be placed along a continuum. The vast majority of participants belong to the middle ground of that continuum. They admit the importance of the interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global for their students' future personal and professional lives. In fact, this realization is the outcome of their first time reflecting on GE, and their agreeing on the urgency to provide opportunities for GE as part of students'

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[1] All the excerpts provided are quoted verbatim.

education is a direct result of such incipient awareness-raising experience. MA and AC report this as follows:

> **Excerpt 1.** "The first important notion I learned is "global citizens", people who self-identify not as members of a state, nation or tribe but as members of the human race with global issues". (MA)

> **Excerpt 2.** "I have learnt that I have to promote students' acquisition of knowledge and skills in sustainable development to achieve SDG. An intended learning outcome from any course taught should be the acquisition of these competencies. Independently of the topic, it is important for the students to become global citizens and realize that most problems are shared by humanity independently of ethnicity, culture or country of origin." (AC)

Common to many teachers in the middle ground of the continuum is the positioning of their academic disciplines as the epicenter of their GE conceptualization. Disciplines operate as the foundation on which to build and develop this concept, and teachers as experts at their epistemologies can find the discipline-specific enablers conducive to students' sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. However, a narrow disciplinary-centered view may also pose some limitations since expanding disciplinary knowledge beyond local contexts often proves challenging for some teachers. This is the case of AA:

> **Excerpt 3.** "As an engineer I could be less affecting my students to be global citizens rather than if my students were majoring in medicine or social sciences." (AA)

On one of the poles of the continuum are placed those teachers who are well acquainted with GE and, after active reflection, recognize that their educational programmes already try to accommodate efforts towards more inclusive and global knowledge and values. AR is an example as he notes that:

Excerpt 4. "Reading about and working around this theme [GE] has convinced me that we should educate our students to become globally engaged citizens. GE is already incorporated in many of our courses, although I was not fully aware of this until now." (AR)

Teachers at this position set out to anchor GE in their specific courses or disciplines, but then transcend that conceptualization by considering that efforts to provide students with meaningful GE must be coordinated and point in the same direction. They consider other stakeholders' support, namely, other colleagues, their department and their educational institution, as essential for the development of GE; and identify themselves as one of the many gears that must operate simultaneously to ensure success.

On the other pole of the continuum there is the exceptional case of one teacher for whom GE is deemed to be a utopia. In the teacher's own words:

Excerpt 5. "The subject proposed [global citizenship] is so vast, so idealistic. Being a citizen of the world seems utopian to me. Not that I don't believe in the possibility of it, but who could benefit from it? Who could claim to be or become one?" (CS)

The answer to the question "*where are teachers now?*" regarding GE seems to clearly indicate that they stand at different stages in their awareness and conceptualization process.

Teaching practices - how do teachers put it into practice?

Insightful educational initiatives emerge regarding teachers' actions to engage students in GE and regard three different levels of application: macro, meso, and micro levels.

At the micro-level, which refers to teachers' zone of action, that is, their disciplines and their classrooms, the most basic appreciation on the part of the teachers is that scientific knowledge on its own is already a source of and for their students' development of global skills

and knowledge. This is coupled with the belief that core values should always permeate education irrespective of the discipline, the context, and/or the learning objectives. As MA puts it:

> **Excerpt 6.** "Many of the notions that I teach are based on scientific knowledge which is beyond local cultures. Therefore, these students will be able to share their knowledge with people from all over the world, opening the door to global contact between communities. So, I think that teaching scientific knowledge contributes *per se* to global citizenship."
>
> (MA)

Additionally, most teachers concur with the carefully planned inclusion of examples, or particular case studies and scenarios as illustrative of the many different approaches to the topics studied in class. Given that such examples are representative of a diverse range of cultural, professional and international contexts, they are primary resources teachers draw on to embed GE within the lessons. Thus, the internationalization of the curriculum (Leask, 2015), which seems to be an extensive common practice for all teacher participants in this study, stands as a compelling driver leading to GE.

Whether as current practices or as potential future activities, teachers seem to see eye to eye on the benefits of personally inviting international experts in the field from inside and outside their particular disciplines to their classrooms. This collaboration among experts represents one of the most common action strategies for infusing an additional and global dimension to programme content and, subsequently, student learning. As CG and VT highlight:

> **Excerpt 7.** "The idea of a special lecture about the topic is to share theory and practical examples from business cases, about my own professional experience as a sustainability auditor and experiences from other colleagues, e.g. a guest lecture specialized in sustainable supply chain management that joins the lecture in its final part." (CG)

Excerpt 8: "a more inspiring dedicated module could be offered, for example inviting representatives from other sectors including social workers, third sector workers, childcare specialists, etc." (VT)

At the same time, teachers advocate the concurrency of top-down forces that can contribute to the development of students' GE and can strengthen teachers' own agency. Given that GE needs to be included in, but is not limited to, specific academic disciplines, it seems more than fitting that transformative initiatives also arrive from the meso and macro levels. At the meso level, a mandatory course on GE common to different educational levels is put forward by teachers. They defend that offering a whole course on the concept is likely to give more agency to the topic and highlight its real value in today's world. Initiatives from the educational institutions (macro level) are also welcomed by teachers and comprise starting or maintaining international programmes for student supervision or research, to provide a specific example mentioned by participants.

Consequently, the question *"how do teachers put global engagement into practice?"* has, on the one hand, shed some light on specific learning activities and collaborations enacted by teachers in their courses. On the other hand, it poses promoting greater synergies between the meso, the macro and the micro levels within each educational setting.

Where to go next?

The challenges and future directions raised by the teachers are closely linked to their current status quo and teaching practices. To start with, it stands out as a significant challenge for teachers to become aware of their own responsibility in equipping students with global knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Likewise, teachers acknowledge their difficulty in recognizing and accepting diversity in themselves, their students and their teaching practices.

This is often accentuated in cultures that do not have the tradition of openly discussing certain values or ideas (see Excerpt 9). EE also comments as follows:

> **Excerpt 9.** "Peace is not a topic which is discussed in France. Even people of my generation whose parents and grand-parents experienced wars take peace for granted. We tend to forget how lucky we are." (SB)

Another struggle common to most teacher participants is embracing GE as a fundamental dimension to their courses and searching for the appropriate enablers to foster its development in class without compromising other aspects that are as important. KB points this out:

> **Excerpt 10.** "The challenge I see is how to combine and stimulate the GE with students. For some it is just being there, in powerpoint modus, for others, it is with a real intent of learning and absorbing." (KB)

The global pandemic has only reinforced this difficulty as now teaching and learning need to be enacted online, which is a complication in itself for many teachers, and many students lack the resources to access this educational model. However, since online education has the potential to break down physical barriers, a final challenge suggested is the creation of international collaboration between universities and among cohorts of teachers who can share resources, experiences and initiatives. In this respect, the course proves to be reassuring as it is an example that has successfully met this challenge. Evidence of it is this teachers' acknowledgement and determination of their role and responsibility as learned through the prompted reflection in the module on GE:

> **Excerpt 11.** "In HE we have to make a big effort of accommodating at this new time, with the promotion of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies. Now, it is time to develop human rights, social and political perspectives, equity, financial

and economic perspectives and cultural perspectives, under the view of our disciplines. It

is the major challenge that society asks us. I am willing to accept it." (MG)

This *"where to go next?"* section reflects that teachers acknowledge their need to

continue working to strengthen their own conceptualization and practical application of GE as

part of their teaching process. And, following their own voices, closer collaboration between

teachers and institutions is likely to be a firm step in that particular direction.

Cultures of Teaching and Learning

Where are we now?

The teachers engaged in analysing their own contexts in relation to the four aspects of

culture (ethnic, local, academic and disciplinary), and the interaction among these aspects, which

construed observable value systems. Excerpt 12 is an example of the interplay between the ethnic

and the academic aspects of cultures of teaching and learning in the Nordic countries:

> **Excerpt 12.** "[…because of the low-hierarchical student/teacher relationship in Sweden]
>
> there is a fine line that makes the student see and treat you as a colleague instead of the
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> leader in the classroom. These students are used to being active in the learning process,
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> however, some students have a background where the teacher was the authority and
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> provider of all information needing more guidance than others. It becomes necessary to
>
> identify and balance it to follow the learning goals of your institution and programme".
>
> (CG)

Both teachers bring up expectations about the teacher' role as facilitator (as opposed to lecturer)

in Denmark and Sweden, who are expected to "earn students' respect" (MW) and maintain "the

fine line" (CG) between what distinguishes a teacher from the rest of the class members. Here the teachers are clearly picking up on Lauridsen & Cozart's (2015) classification of value systems in which the teacher is a mentor, open to being questioned and debated to make way for students' ideas and self-expression.

In the second half of Excerpt 12, the teacher (CG) comments on previous academic experiences that some of the students have had, distinguishing them from the rest of the class in their higher need for guidance as a result of being accustomed to another academic value system in which the teacher is the provider of knowledge. In our previous discussion of the literature, it became clear that students from authority systems expect more guidance because of pressure from their home culture to excel, and out of respect for the teacher, through respectful silence and self-effacement. The extent to which this particular understanding is present in the teacher's remark is not known to us; however, the following sentence (CG in *italics*) shows that the teacher is aware of the importance of identifying these needs. Another teacher (VT in *italics*), in Excerpt 13, also comes to the conclusion that to achieve the learning outcomes, the different aspects of culture should be considered at the classroom level.

> **Excerpt 13.** "Although in a scientific discipline different cultural backgrounds may seem
> less important than in humanities, *I have realized that culture in its four different aspects*
> *does influence the efficacy of our teaching, and we have to take this into account if we*
> *want our students to achieve the learning outcomes*". (VT)

Another subtheme that emerges is one related to previous and present misconceptions about culture. These are often seen in smaller parts of the reflections as in Excerpt 13, where the teacher (VT) voices having a different opinion at the present about the importance of students' 'cultural backgrounds' when learning science. Seeing culture as external to certain fields,

especially those with fixed knowledge production structures as in science subjects, has been noted in earlier EME studies (Dafouz-Milne & Smit, 2020). Another common misconception is conditioning 'multiculturalism' to having multiple nationalities in the classroom, when a group of students from the same country with different home cultures, and/or different academic and disciplinary experiences are, by definition, also 'multicultural'.

> **Excerpt 14.** "Most of my students come from Belgium or France. So, I don't really have a multicultural group". (MA)

The third identified subtheme is internationalisation. The two examples below show two orientations from the perspective of their teachers. The teacher in Excerpt 15 (AB) alludes to having EME in certain programmes and gives examples of activities done to familiarise the incoming students with their new academic and social settings, giving visibility to its foundations of acculturation. While the teacher in Excerpt 16(SB) discusses instances of mobility for internships, incoming guest lecturers (in English), and training with mixed cultural backgrounds.

> **Excerpt 15.** "Offering a program in an international known language as English is already a very common adaptation. Information days or mixed group works are also measures to take in order to familiarize international students with some social and educational norms in the country/university they have chosen to study". (AB)

> **Excerpt 16.** "We encourage the French students to carry out their internships abroad and we've invited foreign colleagues to deliver lectures in English. We even set up a transnational training module with French/German students. There are still many things left to do". (SB)

'Teaching practices'—how we put it to practice.

Teachers' reflections were often very specific about the place of culture in their discipline. In Excerpt 17, a Psychology teacher explains how the assessment tools they use with their patients must take culture into consideration for their tools to be valid.

> **Excerpt 17.** "In Psychology, culture is an important issue in our clinical practice. As clinicians we are often confronted with patients from different cultures. Therefore, we must make our students aware of this aspect so that they can measure the issues in their future practice ". (AV)

Where to go next?

The first challenge presented here concerns students' preparedness to prioritise new cultures; more specifically, the disciplinary culture they have chosen though it may clash with aspects of their local or religious traditions and beliefs. Excerpt 18 (AB) clearly refers to approaching patients of different genders:

> **Excerpt 18.** "Cultural philosophy or even religion are not topics that can be adapted. This does create complications in some majors. For my partner who is working in medicine, some religious beliefs have caused problems in practice of medicine in the hospitals. Touching the other gender for a medical exam might be very common in many countries but apparently is not in some countries before graduation". (AB)

The second challenge is teachers' preparedness to adjust to cultural diversity, and whether this adjustment can be counterproductive in that they may perpetuate stereotypes (Excerpt 19).

Excerpt 19. "I am a bit dubitative at the advice that teachers should adjust to diversity because students would thus not widen their academic experience. Facing new methods and people is an important reason for students to visit other universities, from the same country or not". (MM)

The third challenge is teachers' apprehension about their own competences, most important of all is their own English proficiency, which is often a concern (Excerpt 20).

Excerpt 20. "My personal challenge is increasing the amount of English teaching. It is very time-consuming to prepare English class but it is important to show to the students that even I am bad in English, I try! So they have to try too". (MG)

The fourth challenge lies in acknowledging and acting on other aspects that create barriers between teachers or between teachers and students when lacking "the cultural codes of a generation", or even reinforce inequalities in education due to disability or varied socioeconomic levels (Excerpt 21).

Excerpt 21. "More aspects than culture may catch the eye. For instance, socio-economic background or disabilities may not be easily noticed but may impact prerequisites for learning". (EE)

These challenges are questions that need practical answers and are seen as calls for future directions. Nonetheless, meeting challenges are an act of courage as seen in this teacher's comment:

Excerpt 22. "I think it is very courageous of our foreign students to do what they do: leave your home to dive into the unknown. Not only do they have to study in a foreign

language but they also have to adapt to another culture. The least we can do is take their culture into account and adapt our approach to this multitude of cultures we assemble in our classrooms". (BM)

To sum up, the teachers uptake the concepts of GE and cultures of teaching and learning in their discussions and affirm their importance. Some speak from personal experience in managing the multicultural classroom and others reflect on them as notions pertaining to the future. Through their reflections, it became apparent that GE has to some extent started echoing in formal and informal curricula in some institutions, whereas the fuller sense of 'teaching and learning cultures' (beyond the ethnic dimension) is more novel. Interestingly, disciplinary traditions and academic cultures surfaced in their discussions as a factor that either enhances or limits teachers' ability to put these concepts into practice and incorporate them in their day-to-day teaching. Teachers voice concerns with regards to the modes of conveying these different dimensions of culture to the students and question how to engage them in practices that could effectively enhance GE, especially if teachers find dealing with change to be a challenge.

Conclusion and implications for CPD

In their future professional paths, students are likely to collaborate in highly diversified teams on complex societal problems that necessitate a "capacity to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking in two or more disciplines or established areas of expertise to produce a cognitive advancement [...] in ways that would have been impossible or unlikely through single disciplinary means" (Boix Mansilla & Duraisingh, 2007, p. 219). Interdisciplinary thinking is a particularly relevant set of skills to develop, or rather a "state of mind" to cultivate, to holistically address global issues that require multiangle perspectives, self-reflexivity, humility and a

willingness to rethink and question previously acquired knowledge in one's field of study (Boix

Mansilla et al., 2000).

The 17 SDG's pluralistic nature calls for innovative and creative approaches beyond

geographical, cultural and disciplinary boundaries. Due to the intrinsically monolithic mindset

and the long tradition of knowledge transmission that still prevail in HE, universities are facing

challenges and are struggling "to do justice to contemporary problems" (Godemann, 2008, p.

637), which are "typically value-laden, open-ended, multidimensional, ambiguous […] and resist

being tamed, bounded, or managed by classical problem-solving approaches" (Klein, 2004, p. 4).

To prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century effectively, there has been growing

concern about higher education institutions' slow responsiveness to adapt to constantly evolving

social, political and economic systems.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the climate of permanent mutation, greater

instability and uncertainty reminiscent of the "liquid modern world" (Bauman, 2011). Lack of

permanence and shifting paradigms manifest themselves in all strata of society and education is

at the epicentre of this disruption. Following the massive and sudden move to online teaching and

learning, predictions and tentative scenarios for the future of HE and its internationalisation have

been suggested but they have raised more question marks than provided answers (de Wit, 2021).

Besides, there are significant discrepancies and various levels of institutional engagement

when it comes to understanding, integrating and supporting the SDGs in the internationalised

curricula of HE institutions across the globe. Depending on the context, sustainable education is

embraced, ignored or looked at with scepticism. In practical terms, what does it mean to be

globally engaged? How can we make sure that our classrooms are in effect inclusive so that

internationalisation of the curriculum does not remain a cosmetic marketing tool on institutional

webpages to attract potential students, which 'sells' desirable graduate attributes and increases their employability in a highly turbulent global labour market (Ashwin et al., 2020; Gyamera & Burke, 2017)?

To answer this question, one of the key tools education has at its disposal needs to be urgently addressed. Curriculum reform, or rather deconstruction, has been the focus of attention in recent research (Jester, 2018). The rationale for internationalising the curriculum is often firmly grounded on neoliberal and patriarchal driving forces such as expansion (McGregor & Sang-Ah Park, 2018), international exposure, attractivity, and academic competitiveness, therefore reducing the curriculum to a mere utilitarian component of study programmes (Gyamera & Burke, 2017) and undermining legitimate efforts to make the "invisible" seen and heard, such as underrepresented groups, minorities, and power structures.

As Jester (2018) implies, "[c]urricula do not fall onto the page fully formed, but are built around a series of choices made by educators." It is precisely the role of university teachers to make decisions that transcend the "gendered formations" (Burke & Crozier, 2014) and "neo-colonial interests" (Gyamera & Burke, 2017) in order to initiate important reflections regarding social responsibility and intercultural understanding in their own teaching practices. In order to infuse critical thinking and awareness into their courses, teachers must be equipped with pedagogical strategies that encourage students to actively engage with the curriculum and empower them to de/reconstruct knowledge, as it is interpreted in Anglo-Western societies, by integrating traditionally marginalised and neglected voices. The authors urge HE institutions to support their teaching and academic staff appropriately into alignment with broader global issues. In an age of infodemic, fake news and epistemological crisis, teachers need to help students navigate the flow of information and contextualise it.

In order for teachers to transform their practices, they need scaffolded support over time. Multidisciplinary collaboration, co-teaching, mentoring, critical friendship, and partnering with students all require reflective spaces where teachers can exchange different ways of seeing, doing and thinking. This calls for generous and non-judgemental collaboration, unhindered by silos and power structures where teachers can show vulnerability and take risks. Our classrooms are unique in that they are fabulous laboratories for transformation. If education does not afford us the possibility for failure and learning from mistakes, what other platform allows us to so?

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