

COSMOPOLITANISM TO FRAME TEACHING GLOBAL LITERACIES

Shea N. Kerkhoff and Ming Yi

ABSTRACT

As an interruption to existing nationalistic and neoliberal frames, teachers are beginning to embrace cosmopolitanism to ground literacy instruction. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the possibilities and tensions of using a cosmopolitan approach to literacy instruction. This chapter presents a qualitative study of interviews with 24 educators from the United States, Belize, and China to examine curricular and instructional choices educators report using to promote students' global meaning-making and cosmopolitan worldviews. Findings include three themes: situated relevance, glocal connections, and intercultural collaboration. Participants reported that creating a welcoming environment and promoting equality in the local classroom is foundational to teaching students at the local or global level. Teaching global literacies included teaching about similarities and differences locally and internationally and making local–global connections on issues of importance to the students. Also, participants reported that for students to engage in global meaning-making, they needed to dialogue and collaborate with people from different countries. While the findings present possibilities, the discussion approaches the data through the lens of potential challenges. Some participants reported first helping students move beyond ethnocentric thinking and stereotypes through reflexive exercises so that students could constructively interact with peers cross-culturally. However, not all participants taught reflexivity or with a critical lens. This study may bring awareness to educators as to curricular choices and instructional processes that hold promise for promoting students' global meaning-making.

Keywords: Cosmopolitan literacies; global literacies; US; Belize; China; K-12 instruction

Global Meaning Making

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Brexit in Britain, the election of Trump in the United States, and the COVID-19 pandemic called attention to social, political, and cultural divides within and among nations. How do teachers foster a sense of unity without resorting to nationalism in the current context? Nationalistic rhetoric pits other countries as competitors or scapegoats; however, in order to solve contemporary global challenges, nations must work together as collaborators. In an era of global migration, economic integration, and communication technologies making global connections more frequent and faster than ever before, teachers need a multidimensional understanding of global systems, so that we can move beyond outdated nationalistic curriculum in schools (Abu El-Haj, 2007; Osler & Starkey, 2018; Sánchez & Ensor, 2020).

This chapter explores the possibilities and tensions of using a cosmopolitan approach to literacy instruction to promote practices and dispositions that transcend self and international lines. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate teaching practices reported by educators to promote K-12 students' global meaning-making.

Tierney (2020) describes literacies as composed of active processes of meaning-making with texts. Tierney (2018) accentuates the active nature "in hopes of replacing passive, receptive, asocial, acultural, apolitical, restrictive, and repressive forms of reading [and writing] with more active, collective, critical, cross-border, line stepping, interrogative, widely intertextual, and adaptive engagements" (p. 399). These literacy processes are situated in contexts and social in nature. Global meaning-making as situated means that literacy practices are enacted in local and global contexts. Social refers to the fact that literacies are used to interact and communicate with others. As situated and social practices, global meaning-makers draw on cultural norms and ways of knowing in order to communicate effectively within and across cultural contexts.

Although many avow the goal of teaching global meaning-making to be justice and peace, some view global meaning-making as controversial or overly political. By its social and cultural nature, literacy instruction is subject to different political ideologies and theoretical frameworks (Chappel, 2019; Vandeyar, 2021). Current competing frameworks for teaching literacies from a global lens include neoliberalism and cosmopolitanism.

Neoliberalism is an economic theory contending markets should drive decisions not governments (Giroux & Giroux, 2006). Neoliberals believe that big government is inefficient and central planning has been ineffective (Harvey, 2007). In practice, neoliberalism has included deregulation that benefited corporations, hurt laborers, and cut funding on social programs, such as education. Specifically, in global education, Neoliberal practices include administrative decisions based on efficiency, economic markets, and global competition (c.f. Giroux & Giroux, 2006; Sleeter, 2008). Neoliberal policies, whether intended to or not, have increased income disparity (Harvey, 2005) and the commercialization of governments and schools (Apple, 2011). As Johnston, Omogun and Lee (2021) assert, "When business and economic interests commandeer public goods, such as teaching and schooling, globalization becomes a pressurized force to privilege privatized values over the actual people, cultures, languages, literacies, and communities that comprise our

world” (p. 215). Although neoliberalism is not compatible with critical theories and pedagogies, cosmopolitanism is compatible and there is a growing body of literature supporting cosmopolitanism as a philosophy to underpin global meaning-making (Sanchez & Ensor, 2020; Tierney, 2018).

COSMOPOLITANISM THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our theoretical framework is based on cosmopolitan theory, specifically educational cosmopolitanism as set forth by Hansen (2010, 2011) and Wahlström (2014) and cosmopolitan literacy/ies as set forth by Choo (2016, 2018, 2020), Hull and Stornaiuolo (2014), and Spires et al. (2019). Educational cosmopolitanism theory combines ideas from critical cosmopolitanism and the context of teaching and learning. Cosmopolitan literacies contribute the specific context of literacy teaching and learning within educational cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitan Roots

Cosmopolitanism, an ancient Greek word, roughly translates to citizen of the world. Cosmopolitanism does not advocate for a cosmopolitan identity to replace national or ethnic identities as if identity were a zero-sum concept (Kymlicka, 2004). Instead, the theory explains how people today often hold multiple identities (Banks, 2008) and those identities may constantly shift and change (Wahlström, 2014). This is supported by empirical research on K-12 students’ multiple and fluid identities across national borders (Abu El-Haj, 2007; Valenzuela, 2013). Following this line of reasoning, people may participate in both their ethnic culture/s and national culture/s while also associating with a global culture or cosmopolitan identity (Rizvi, 2008).

Likewise, cosmopolitanism is not a dualistic framework that sees curriculum as either about the nation or the world. Rizvi (2008) asserts: “This does not mean ignoring local issues, but to understand them within the broader context of the global shifts that are reshaping the very nature of localities” (p. 21). Teachers convey how local communities are globally connected to communities around the world (Chappel, 2019; Smith, 2013). In order to contextualize cosmopolitanism to teaching and learning, Hansen (2010) and Wahlström (2014) proposed a framework for educational cosmopolitanism.

Defining Educational Cosmopolitanism

Educational cosmopolitanism can be understood through four dimensions: hospitality, self-reflexivity, intercultural dialogue, and transactions of perspectives (Wahlström, 2014). Hospitality is a cosmopolitan term that refers to an openness to diverse people and values. Self-reflexivity is a stance that constantly considers the impact of one’s actions on others. Intercultural dialogue and transactions of perspectives involve a give-and-take of perspectives across borders. These last two dimensions illustrate that cosmopolitanism in education is dialogic and active

(Choo, 2018). Though originating from Western classical tradition, Choo (2020) has linked cosmopolitanism to the inheritance of Confucius, by bringing in Ren. Ren signifies a moral value of others, starting with loving one's family members and extending outwards to include community and country. The highest standard of Ren requires us to show love to humanity around the world. In practice, Confucius asked people to care about others, move beyond social limitations to love, and care for people who are distant (Choo, 2020).

Helping students to develop cosmopolitan dispositions is not easy. Gough (2014) describes the challenge in curriculum and instruction: "The practical challenge is how to *perform* an ethics of inclusion rather than a politics of exclusion" (p. 90, emphasis original). Teachers must work to build a common culture based on the multiple cultures of the students. Another challenge is teaching about differences in a way that does not fetishize the exotic or oversimplify differences to stereotypes (Gough, 2014; Hansen, 2010). Doing so requires teachers to balance diversity and unity. As Banks (2008) asserts, "Unity without diversity results in hegemony and oppression; diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the nation-state" (p. 133).

In addition to the tension between local and global, there is a tension in the literature between tradition and innovation. For example, some theorists accept the globalization of culture, and some oppose the loss of traditional indigenous cultures (Beck, 2006). Cosmopolitanism works to keep cultural traditions alive while at the same time questioning the consequences of specific traditions and constructing new ways of being in a reflexive cycle. Adopting the cosmopolitan stance of self-reflexivity, teachers and students question their own assumptions and biases, reflect on their own attitudes and behaviors, and make decisions in line with their values. Hansen (2011) describes negotiating the tension of the new and old as having a "reflective openness to the new fused with reflective loyalty to the known" (p. 86). In reality, societies change and progress, but critically conscious citizens, such as who we hope our students will become, do not accept change without deliberation.

Dimensions of Cosmopolitan Literacies

Negotiating these tensions when reading, writing, speaking, and listening across differences (e.g., culture, race, nationality, etc.) requires certain dispositions or stances. Resulting from a review of the literature, the authors determined four stances of critical cosmopolitan literacies – proximal, reflexive, reciprocal, and responsive – all leading to praxis. The first stance, proximal, means "locating self in relation to others" (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014, p. 29). From a proximal stance, learners establish their place in the world. They understand how their own and others' perspectives are shaped by culture, history, and society. When reading and writing, learners engage in reflexivity, that is, critical reflection of their assumptions, perspectives, and ways of knowing (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Wahlström, 2014).

Hull and Stornaiuolo (2014) state that a reflexive stance is developed "not only by observing but also by moving beyond consumerist, spectator-like, or

acquisition-focused actions to participatory inquiry” (p. 33). As learners participate in literacies to construct new knowledge about other cultures and perspectives, teachers can facilitate intercultural dialogue from a reciprocal stance. Reciprocal means give-and-take and requires equality among participants. As learners engage in reciprocal dialogue across differences (e.g., cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, and experiences), teachers can encourage learners to consider others’ perspectives from a place of openness and respect, often called hospitality in cosmopolitan theories. Choo (2016) puts forth the term “hospitable imagination” to describe a stance that hosts the other without limit, with complete openness in order to understand the other as fully as possible, without imposing one’s own perspectives or judgment. As learners coconstruct knowledge and collaborate, teachers can help students work from a responsive stance, meaning collaborating in a way that meets others’ needs. Responsiveness disrupts monolithic interpretations of culture and relies on critical empathy (Choo, 2020; Dunkerly-Bean, Bean, & Alnajjar, 2014). Lastly, praxis involves taking informed action in ethical solidarity with others. Praxis can include resisting against, advocating for, holding space for others, making space for oneself, or building something new (Soong, 2018).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Global meaning making and critical cosmopolitan literacies are specific frameworks under a larger umbrella term called global literacies. Global literacies refer to “the ability to analyze texts and issues with a critical lens and global perspective; awareness and respect for world languages and cultures; view of literacy as a social, cultural, and political practice; and assuming an identity as a global citizen” (Spire, Kerkhoff, & Paul, 2020, p. 62). Research on global literacies is an emerging area. As a result, we also reviewed tangential research inclusive of global citizenship education and globally competent learning. Case studies by Choo (2017), Ferguson-Patrick, Reynolds, and Macqueen (2018), Fujikane (2003), and Vandeyar (2021) illustrated that global citizenship is touted as a priority in the Global South, West/North, and East, and that the schools studied were attempting to integrate global learning in literacy and language instruction. Through a review of the relevant literature, the relationship between local and global emerged as a common discussion with research illuminating both how teachers make connections between the local and global as well as the tensions they experience when doing so.

Connections Between Local and Global

In research with teacher candidates, Guo’s (2014) case study in Canada, An’s (2014) action research in the United States, and Byker and Marquardt’s (2016) case study in the United States found that emphasizing global inclusiveness resulted in teacher candidates’ increased knowledge and confidence in global teaching and commitment to social justice locally and globally. Descriptive research in exemplary K-12 classrooms has shown that connecting global issues from a critical perspective shows promise for supporting students in developing

empathy. To allow for the complexity required for teaching literacy from a critical perspective, research has found that connecting global issues to local issues allowed for the complexity required for critical and empathetic understanding (Choo, 2017; Johnston et al., 2021). In Salmon, Gangotena, and Melliou (2018)'s study of an international virtual exchange among kindergartners, teachers found global thinking routines useful for structuring discussion in a way that moved from the personal to perspective-taking. Salmon et al. found evidence of critical and empathic understanding through the use of the routines: "Critical thinkers are responsive to different points of view, and the importance of listening to children's perspectives is critical in promoting their critical thinking. The teachers found it powerful to use thinking routines that help children take perspective" (p. 305). The ability to take perspective was associated with the ability to empathize.

Tensions Between Local and Global

Research has illuminated tensions related to infusing global issues in literacy education. For example, in Choo's (2017) comparative research on literacy and language education in one school in Singapore and one in the United States, she found tensions between teachers' presentation of global perspectives focusing on the universal or on cultural particularities. Emphasis on commonalities with others may erase differences in history, culture, and lived experiences. Similarly, Zhang (2019) found that while the curriculum of the case, a Macau international school in Canada, valued universalism, the teachers enacted a cosmopolitan outlook valuing diversity.

Ferguson-Patrick et al. (2018) case study on teacher education in Australia found tensions related to teaching for local demands – such as high stakes testing – and global demands – such as twenty-first century skills. However, Chappel (2019) and Kerkhoff and Cloud (2020) found that teachers were willing to unlearn a local–global dichotomy and willing to conceptualize learning as contextualized to localities and relevant to local cultures while also being globally minded.

Teaching Literacies for Global Social Justice

One way teachers situate K-12 literacy instruction for global-mindedness is through reading global literature, texts set in or written by people from other countries. However, scholars warn that reading global literature without a critical lens can perpetuate stereotypes or leave children feeling hopeless about global problems (Short et al., 2016). Approaching literature from a critical cosmopolitan lens promotes the noticing of a shared humanity while simultaneously acknowledging cultural differences and valuing diverse perspectives. Through analyzing global literary narratives, learners from elementary (Dunkerly-Bean et al., 2017; Sanchez & Ensor, 2020) to secondary (Choo, 2016; Johnston et al., 2021; Wissman, 2018) to teacher preparation (Sowa & Schmidt, 2016) interrupted stereotypes and discussed how global issues involve systems of oppression.

Reading literary narratives provided the right balance of emotional connection to foster empathy-building and distance to allow for unlearning and learning about justice and the world (Falter & Kerkhoff, 2018; Van Vaerenewyck, 2017). A critical cosmopolitan lens also promotes praxis, being transformed and enacting transformation for social justice. Previous research has found that praxis on a global level can be achieved in literacy classrooms learning *with* international partners through virtual international discussions about shared readings with other students (Sanchez & Ensor, 2020; Sowa & Schmidt, 2016), projects where students work with international experts to address a global issue (Kerkhoff, Spires, & Wright, 2020; Spires et al., 2019), and restorying where international groups of students work together to tell a story of a global issue, such as immigration, from underrepresented perspectives (Sanchez & Ensor, 2020).

Positionality Statement

The first author is a teacher educator who identifies as a white American woman. She taught high school world literature for seven years and now researches literacy instruction in the United States, China, Belize, and Kenya. She conducted the interviews and collaborated with the second author to analyze the data. The second author was a doctoral candidate in the United States at the time of the study. He now identifies as a Chinese teacher educator who conducts research in Chinese teachers' colleges. He has two years of experience teaching English as a foreign language.

METHODS

This study was an exploratory qualitative study that was part of a larger mixed-methods study on teaching global literacies in K-12 content areas. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is used “because a problem or issue needs to be explored” (p. 47). Our qualitative inquiry examined the issue in a holistic way, permitting us to hear the voices and stories of those who experience the construct as well as the evidence of teacher educators who study the construct (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This allowed us to consider practitioner and researcher views of the construct. The research question was *What did global educators believe were the components of teaching global literacies at the K-12 level?*

Participants comprised 20 experienced K-12 teachers and four teacher educators committed to global literacies (Table 1). In order to garner diverse perspectives, we used purposeful snowball sampling (Creswell, 2013) with the criteria of (1) having taught at least three years in K-12, (2) value of global perspectives, and (3) experience with people from another country. We purposefully selected the beginning sample for maximum variation in demographics to include teachers from the Global North, West, South, and East; multiple gender, ethnic, and racial identities; as well as grade levels and content areas taught (Table 2). The beginning sample was recruited through nongovernment organizations (NGO) and university global education programs to ensure all participants had the

Table 1. Five Dimensions of Critical Cosmopolitan Literacies.

Dimension	Relation to Tierney's Model of Global Meaning-making	Explanation
Proximal stance	Reading self, being mindful: Finding a higher moral plane	Locating self in relation to others, seeing self, understanding self as a cultural being
Reflexive stance	Interrupting existing frames	Seeing the other, considering how one's actions and words affect others and vice versa, engaging in critical self-reflexivity
Reciprocal stance	Shifting to an ecology of eclecticism, indigenizing	Engaging in dialogue and exchange with others rooted in equality, seeing self in relation to (not vs.) the other, understanding the other across difference, learning with others, engaging in transactions of perspectives and ways of knowing
Responsive stance	Decolonizing spaces: Adapting, translanguaging, fusing, border-crossing	Seeing difference through an equity lens, seeing the world from another perspective, engaging in hospitable imagination
Praxis	Being an activist or actionist	Acting in a critically informed way in ethical solidarity with others on global and intercultural issues of justice

relevant practical experience to provide in-depth information. Four teachers were from and taught in Belize and were recruited through the first researchers' work with an NGO who partnered with Belizean schools to facilitate professional development. Three teachers were from and taught in China and were recruited through a university partnership with their school. Ten teachers and three administrators lived and worked in the United States and were recruited through NGO and university networks.

Interviews were conducted over a three-month period using a one-on-one semistructured interview protocol (Creswell, 2013) of nine open-ended questions. Questions intended to garner the curricular choices and instructional processes participants chose to lead to global literacies when teaching or what they hoped teachers in the United States would share about the world. Interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes and were audio-recorded when permitted.

Verbatim interview transcripts and researcher notes were analyzed in NVivo software using iterative thematic analysis. We first immersed ourselves in the data and then began a priori coding, tagging key statements with one of the four dimensions of educational cosmopolitanism or five dimensions of critical cosmopolitan literacies. For key statements that did not directly align with the theoretical framework, we generated *in vivo* codes. We compared codes looking for patterns to become themes, as displayed in Table 3. Lastly, we "refined and defined" the themes ensuring each was internally consistent and discrete from the other themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92).

bell hooks (1994) reminds us that our backgrounds have shaped "the biases that informed the way knowledge would be given and received" (p. 178). In other words, we could empathetically listen and systematically observe but our biases

Table 2. Table of Participants for Interviews.

Race	Sex	Credentials	Current Position	Grade Level	Personal Global Experiences	Professional Global Experiences
White	F	M.Ed., NBCT	Teacher in United States	6–12	Intl. vacations	PD abroad, culturally relevant teaching course
White	F	M.Ed., NBCT	Teacher in United States	6–8	Hosted exchange students, Intl. service	Student teaching abroad, PD abroad
White	F	M.Ed., NBCT	Teacher in United States	K-5	n/a	PD abroad, global learning course
White	F	M.A.	Teacher in United States	9–12	Intl. service	Led trips abroad for students, PD abroad
African American	F	M.Ed.	Teacher in United States	K-12	n/a	Global learning course, PD abroad
White	F	M.Ed.	Teacher in United States	6–12	Intl. vacations	Global learning course, global project collaboration, intl. conference
White	M	M.Ed.	Teacher in United States	K-5, 9–12	n/a	AP world history training, global experiences course
White	F	M.Ed.	Teacher in United States	6–8	Intl. vacations, study abroad	Global project PD, IB training
White	F	M.Ed.	Teacher in United States	6–8	Intl. vacations	IB training
White	F	M.Ed.	Teacher in United States	K-5	Intl. vacations	Courses in global learning
Hispanic	F	B.A.	Teacher in Belize	K-5	Bilingual	Work with international education NGO
Hispanic	F	B.A.	Teacher in Belize	K-5	Bilingual	Work with international education NGO
Hispanic	F	B.A.	Teacher in Belize	K-5	Bilingual	Work with international education NGO
Hispanic	M	B.A.	Teacher in Belize	K-5	Studied abroad, bilingual	Work with international education NGO
Asian	F	M.Ed.	Teacher in China	K-5	Intl. vacations, bilingual	Global learning course, study abroad
Asian	F	M.Ed.	Teacher in China	6–8	Intl. vacations, bilingual	Global learning course, study abroad
Asian	M	M.Ed.	Teacher in China	K-5	Intl. vacations, bilingual	Global learning course, study abroad
African American	F	M.Ed.	Admin in United States	K-12	Intl. vacations, first generation American	Founded intl. theme school
White	M	Ed.D.		K-12	Intl. service	Taught abroad

Table 2. (Continued)

Race	Sex	Credentials	Current Position	Grade Level	Personal Global Experiences	Professional Global Experiences
White	F	M.Ed.	Admin in United States	K-12	Intl. vacations	Global ed administrator, intl. conferences
Asian	F	M.Ed.	Admin in United States	9-12	Intl. vacations, bilingual	Graduate study abroad, global learning course, global project collaboration
White	F	Ph.D.	Teacher educator in United States	9-12	Studied abroad	Taught abroad, researches global education and internationalization of teacher education
White	F	M.Ed., NBCT	Teacher educator in United States	K-5, 6-8, 9-12	Studied abroad, intl. vacations, hosted exchange students, bilingual	Led study abroad
White	M	Ph.D.	Teacher educator in United States	6-8	n/a	Taught global learning, led intl. PD

would always shape the truth that we heard and saw. To bracket our assumptions, we kept a researcher journal during the study. To minimize biases, we analyzed verbatim transcripts, utilized reliability testing of codes for a random sample of data, and performed peer-debriefing sessions (Creswell, 2013).

To increase trustworthiness, we utilized investigator triangulation, member checking, and detailed reporting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2018). After analysis, we conducted member checks by emailing the themes and descriptions. Eleven participants responded with positive comments, and no participants responded with negative feedback or suggestions to improve accuracy.

Table 3. Themes and Codes From Analysis.

Theme	Example Codes
Glocal connections	Scaffolding global learning* Building cultural knowledge of students Intentional instruction of local and global issues
Situated relevance	Facilitating student-centered learning* Building relationships with students and parents Building partnerships with the local international community*
Intercultural collaboration	Providing first-hand experiences* Design international collaborations* Learning new languages*

Note: *In vivo codes.

FINDINGS

The findings comprised three overarching themes: situated relevance, global connections, and intercultural transactions. The three themes are comprehensive and mutually exclusive.

Situated Relevance: "Bring in Their Backgrounds"

Teaching global literacies is locally situated, meaning that teachers are cognizant that each lesson happens in a particular geographic place, within a sociocultural context, and at a particular time in history. Teaching global literacies is also personally situated, meaning that teachers must make learning relevant for each student.

When teaching global literacies, participants described the importance of a hospitable classroom environment that was welcoming of students' whole identities (including cultural, national, racial, and linguistic) and whole being (intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and teachers in Belize added spiritual). To make global literacies relevant to each individual, participants stated that teachers must consider the context and know the backgrounds and interests of students. A social studies teacher educator declared, "Every teacher has some responsibility to be ready, aware, knowledgeable of the cultures that are in their school, in the community that their school serves. ... That's absolutely essential." Learning about culture began with inventory of the cultures and countries represented in the classroom and then inviting students to share their backgrounds. One math teacher from a diverse school asked her students: "How can we teach each other about our cultures, first?" Knowing one's students was perceived as important in order to create a hospitable classroom as well as to make learning relevant to students.

Participants considered students' cultures as foundational to any social and cultural learning that would take place, as literacy was considered a social and cultural practice. In support of learning about and affirming students' identities, participants valued building relationships with students and their families. Relationship with parents was considered important to learn more about students' experiences but also to build trust so that classes could have deep and meaningful discussions, "Teachers have to be able to ... develop good relationships with parents because invariably when you're really doing a deep exploration of culture you're going to get into issues of religion, of war, you know, of differences." Participants perceived diversity of perspectives as adding to the richness of intellectual pursuit.

Participants often described teaching for global literacies as a pedagogy that cultivates a community of learners. They perceived that teaching within a community of learners gives students a voice both to express their concerns and needs and to learn from each other. In this way, the teacher's role is as facilitator in the classroom and students can teach each other. One participant stated, "You can get more involved when you bring in their backgrounds and allow students to have a voice, and encourage students who are, especially international, to describe some of the differences in their lives." Participants understood tolerance

for difference to be a major component of a community of learners. Another component of cultivating a community of learners was helping students to connect to each other. Cultivating a disposition of openness across differences was a goal participants shared, and they believed that cultivating a classroom environment that values diversity and promotes equality is foundational to teaching global literacies.

Participants understood that students needed intentional instruction in cross-cultural communication and stereotype reduction in order to be responsible local and global citizens. Teachers in the United States stated that their students needed to learn about multiple cultures because their own communities and some of their classrooms were presently home to people from all over the world. They adapted instruction to be responsive to the cultures in their classroom and to meet learners' diverse needs. Educators also acknowledged that when working in cross-cultural situations, the work should be grounded in relationships. For example, a high school English teacher stated, "Since building relationships is so important to me between my students and I, it's also important when you're forging these partnerships that those people collaborating at any angle are also very vested in one another." In this way situated relevance applied to bringing in students' backgrounds and partners' cultural ways of knowing and being also.

Glocal Connections: "It's Got to Be Authentic"

According to participants, helping the students to discover the authentic connections between the world and themselves was an important component of teaching global literacies. Combining the words *local* and *global* form *glocal*, a word that signifies that local communities around the world are connected by global systems. There can be no global without the local nor a local without the global. One Chinese teacher noted how her alarm clock was made in China, her coffee was from Kenya, and her banana from Columbia meaning that she had touched three continents all before leaving her house that morning. To participants, teaching global systems was a matter of social importance for their students' individual successes in the future but also for social cohesion and world peace. Teaching global literacies included teaching about the past and also current events from multiple perspectives. Participants agreed that reading books about holiday celebrations around the world was a common form of global education that they observed but that this approach was not enough because it lacked depth and complexity. A middle school English teacher from a diverse school gave two criteria for teaching about the world that develops students' global literacies: "It's got to be deep, it's got to be authentic." A teacher educator described the kind of multifaceted instruction that he had witnessed in research sites as "a cycle of exploration, problem solving, identifying different points of view, supporting your argument, discussions within the group whereby you pushed back on each other. I mean, so those are key components of a lesson that fosters global-mindedness." Exploring, considering multiple perspectives, and discussing with others were what he saw as key.

Participants perceived that the need to go deep meant that teaching global literacies could not just be taught in social studies or language class but across the curriculum. Math, science, and special education teachers all felt that teaching for global literacies should be part of their curriculum and instruction also. Consistently, teachers from several disciplines reported teaching global awareness and perspective-taking by reading and discussing international current events routinely.

One English teacher integrated glocal connections into a substantive inquiry project. She partnered with a school in China, and the students worked in international groups online to compare coming-of-age literature through discussions over Skype and then research the teenage experience in both countries. She and her coteacher in the international classroom set academic content goals for the project. However, she also set global learning goals, such as that the students would learn how the culture in the other country is different from US culture and how the teenage experience is similar in the other country and the United States. She scaffolded by having conversations with the students about approaching sensitive subjects in conversations and by informal check-ins throughout the unit. "I don't think the students got a 'grade' for global learning, but their question had to be of social significance to both countries and their sources had to be from both countries." In this way, global literacies was intentional, students' process was scaffolded, and growth assessed, though informally.

By presenting students the glocal connections already present in their daily lives, teachers scaffolded instruction by beginning with social issues close to home and then scaling out. Reflexivity in the classroom provides a space for students to think about the causes and effects of their own actions on the world, their nation's actions or lack of action, as well as how people's actions around the world affect them. While reflection is not the same as reflexivity, participants perceived reflection as an important component of the practice of reflexivity. One participant stated, "As you're navigating that environment it's not only reflection *on* action, it's a reflection *in* action. So as its unfolding, you know, having that ability to reflect and those understandings of other cultures to be able to communicate and articulate those understandings." A middle grades teacher described an activity called shipwrecked her students complete:

They have to essentially build a civilization collaboratively. . . . But during the course of that lesson, they're talking about leadership, and that leads into types of government. We're talking about laws. Do we need laws? Do we need leaders? Why do we have them? Do we need money? Do we divide up property? And so that guided it toward the Syrian migrants in Europe right now. And their first response, "Well, I can't believe – why don't they just let them in?" And that led to a discussion about resources.

The participant explained that students draw on this lesson for the rest of the year as they questioned social structures.

Participants perceived reflexivity as an important part of both instruction for students and teacher practice. Teachers perceived that they needed to reflect on their own assumptions and biases and allow opportunities for students to do the

same. One foreign language high school teacher described a goal of her instruction is for students “to break down stereotypes, we all hold them.” Many participants reported using primary sources and texts written by authors from diverse countries in order to help students broaden their understanding and make global connections. A middle school teacher at a racially and socioeconomically diverse school explained that adding one international source to a lesson was not enough. She was deliberate in providing multiple international perspectives with authors from different genders, socioeconomic statuses, or religions. She went on to say, “I would be doing them a disservice if I wasn’t providing multiple perspectives for them to read about.”

Intercultural Collaboration: “Get a First-Hand Perspective”

Teaching global literacies involves an exchange between two cultures, not one-way communication of ideas, but two-way giving and receiving of ideas. A few participants talked about international partnerships with schools in Guatemala, China, and Mexico, and equality was especially important because of cosmopolitan viewpoints. They spoke of how they perceived cultures different from their own through an asset paradigm as opposed to a deficit paradigm. These participants wanted students to view other countries, other cultures, and other perspectives as different, interesting, and equal – not as weird, gross, or inferior. One participant described her belief:

When they are watching the news, or when they meet someone from another country or another culture that ... it’s not weird, it’s different. Their first reaction, we just had that conversation, something just happened and they went, “Ew.” And I went, “Oh, no, wait. It’s never ew, it’s different. It’s different than what I do, but that doesn’t make it wrong.” And I think that does build that compassion to be able to see something from another person’s point of view.

Cross-cultural connections both within classrooms by providing opportunities for students to share about themselves and bring their rich cultural experiences into classroom spaces as well as beyond the classroom walls through field trips to international spaces in their communities or through global discussions of books via social media or video conferencing were perceived as crucial to democratic education. As the English teacher who had her students work with students in China on a virtual inquiry project shared, “It’s only through that cultural sharing, it’s only through those interactions, it’s only through those efforts. . . that we’re able to come to the kind of understandings that enable cultural coalitions, that enable kind of the democratic flowering.” Democratic flowering was perceived as the growth of democratic values, a positive outcome.

Participants reported that for students to truly develop global literacies, they needed experiential learning. While international travel was perceived as ideal, teachers spoke of a variety of instructional practices that could take place without passports. Teachers used simulations, field trips, guest speakers, cross-cultural collaborations, and project-based learning on global issues to give their students

new experiences from which to make meaning. To facilitate transactions of practice, participants stated that teachers should provide opportunities for intercultural dialogue as well as learning experiences where students construct knowledge and grow through the learning process.

Participants spoke of dialogue where students both gave and received communication, such as through expert panel question and answer sessions or online discussion boards. They preferred these experiences to one-way experiences, such as giving charity, where participants perceived that students could develop superiority complexes. A teacher educator illustrated the importance of “Engag[ing] students in those *complicated* conversations either virtually like the pen pal things or synchronously with students from other countries.” The participant continued the thought with how much easier technology makes these complicated conversations. “And certainly with the internet that’s a lot easier.” All participants noted that digital literacy is tied to global learning. One participant explained, “Global learning is deeply impacted by technology literacy.” In addition to digital literacy, participants perceived that student engagement increased with traditional literacy practices (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills) as students conducted discussions and projects with students in other countries. A middle school teacher whose students worked on a project virtually with students in China asserted, “I know for a fact that those students were a lot more vested in learning. They had much more analysis in their writing. And they had very rich and just incredible multimedia videos that they produced.”

Participants reiterated their perceived importance of students connecting with real people, whether that involved Skype conversations between classes of second graders, asking questions of guest speakers during field trips, or project management discussions over WeChat between small groups of high schoolers. Participants acknowledged bringing in speakers from different backgrounds and taking students to places within their own community where people from different backgrounds worship or live so that students can not only observe and listen to different perspectives but also to ask questions. For example, a high school social studies teacher invited religious leaders from different world religions to serve on a panel. He described how the question and answer format was more participatory for the students than a guest lecture and provided opportunities for students to gain clarity and build understanding through exchanging dialogue. This participant also described taking students to a mosque, explaining that this is important because students “were able to get a first-hand perspective.” The first-hand experience was perceived as superior for global literacies development than traditional delivery methods.

Going a step further, participants desired that their students develop relationships with people from different countries. One participant described the importance of small group conversations during an international collaboration as part of the Global Read Aloud project. During the Global Read Aloud, the students in both classrooms read a common book and then had asynchronous conversations using a discussion board. “It’s like once that trust was built between both sides of the kids, and they realized they could make themselves

vulnerable to one another, that's when things really started happening for the kids." Participants stated how the relationships students made during collaboration were the most important part of the project because students learned about another culture in an authentic way while building upon each other's different sets of prior experiences and knowledge. At the same time, the students learned how many similarities they shared with their partners and created connections that increased engagement with the learning. She stated, "They wanted to help each other succeed." Participants also stated that they persisted through the challenges of intercultural dialogue across the globe, such as differing time zones, holiday calendars, and curriculum, because of the relationships they developed with their global partner teachers. One participant shared that she believed learning languages was important because conversing in each others' languages builds a trust that is foundational for truly deep conversations to take place.

Participants stated that cross-cultural collaborations help students develop leadership. Students as young as first grade were perceived as increasing their leadership abilities through intercultural projects. A first-grade teacher described:

I really think it's good for the kids to see different perspectives and learn from each other and being able – like, I had a high Hispanic population, they were able to step into that leadership role and communicate to the students in Guatemala, where the students that weren't Spanish speaking did not have that connection. So, it kind of also just gives those students with that connection a leadership role that they can step into and take charge.

As part of leadership, participants discussed advancing students' creativity through problem-solving and inquiring through multiple perspectives. Several participants mentioned that problem-solving and inquiry on a global level encouraged global citizenship, as one teacher from China described:

Global citizenship not only means that you should be able to effectively communicate and collaborate with people from different cultures, different backgrounds, but also you should actually cross the cultural boundary to face some global issues. So I will see the world not as a world of factories; it's like you are working with people and you feel comfortable working with them, but I would also see it as a global village, and that is the final goal of how to cultivate – of promoting global citizenship.

In addition to global citizenship, several participants perceived international collaborations increased students' ambitions. For example, a participant who taught in an underresourced urban community in the United States said that "to be able to envision a life outside of the current cycle of poverty that they're in because of this partnership; to visualize themselves going to school in another place, or working with people in another country, was way more than I could have ever envisioned." Intercultural experiences became transformative for students. The experiences involved changes in knowledge and also beliefs and actions. One US participant's students told her that the collaboration project with Chinese students "really changed them." She shared that students seemed more socially aware and responsible and confident that they could make a difference in the world.

Summary of Findings

Participants reported that creating a welcoming environment and promoting equality in the local classroom is foundational to teaching students to do likewise, whether at the local or global level. When teaching global literacies, teachers connected international resources within the community, made explicit the connections between the students and the world, and helped students build connections with others. They included teaching about similarities and differences locally and internationally and made local–global connections on issues of importance to the students. In other words, students considered local and global diversity as well as universal human experiences across the world. Also, participants reported that students needed to dialogue, collaborate, and learn with people from different countries.

DISCUSSION

As we write this chapter amidst a global pandemic, it is hard to deny that the world is interconnected. Tierney (2018) asked us to consider our responsibility to an increasingly interconnected world. The purpose of this chapter was to present findings from a study exploring what it means to teach global literacies to K-12 students with the goal of adopting critical cosmopolitan literacy stances and enacting global meaning-making. Twenty-four educators with global education experiences were interviewed to garner classroom practices utilized by real teachers. This section examines the findings through the lens of potential challenges and describes the implications for future research.

Challenges and Tensions

Overall, participants reported first helping students to move beyond ethnocentric thinking and to breakdown stereotypes through reflexive exercises so that students could then constructively interact with peers cross-culturally (Tolisano, 2014). However, not all teachers in the qualitative sample taught reflexivity or with a critical lens. To a small group of participants, knowing students' cultures and engaging in cross-cultural collaborations were not enough. While all participants favored teaching that encourages students to question and analyze *themselves* and *texts*, some participants added *society*. Only half explicitly acknowledged that teaching for global literacies contains an agenda that promotes acceptance of different religions and ways of thinking. Other participants believed teaching should be apolitical. For example, two participants explicitly mentioned that education should be for career preparation and steer clear of political agendas. Participants agreed that education should push students to "broaden their horizons." One participant stated, "Part of what education needs to do is push kids out of their comfort zone and help them see the world through a lens that will allow them to adapt to the world and help them also shape the world." Participants who acknowledged having a political agenda wanted students to not only break down their own stereotypes but also to break down systems of oppression worldwide.

Even when participants held strong beliefs in favor of teaching global literacies, some still felt they could not practice all of what they believed. The

interaction between beliefs and practices is complex. A variety of constraints may result in teachers' inability to enact on their beliefs about education. Participants mentioned limited time, resources, and budgets as barriers to teachers engaging in meaningful global education in their classroom. This corroborates previous research on barriers to global education (Pike, 2015). Teachers may downgrade their own beliefs to students' needs, real or perceived, to administrators' agendas (Allen, 2013) or to curriculum standards (Rapoport, 2010).

Another potential challenge, one cannot teach global meaning-making without being globally competent oneself. If teachers believe in global education, they must learn not only the content but also the processes of global education, such as how to teach controversial topics and conflict resolution (Kerkhoff & Cloud, 2020). As Allen (2013) states, "Because of the many uncertainties inherent in classroom teaching, teachers may plan practices that are consistent with their beliefs but find it necessary to deviate from their plans during actual instructional time" (p. 136). However, the teacher should expect each class to learn cross-cultural communication skills (Susmith, 2007). Therefore, the teacher must have metaknowledge about culture and communication in order to scaffold cross-cultural communication and intercultural dialogue. In addition, to enact cross-cultural communication and intercultural dialogue from reciprocal and responsive stances, teachers need systemic understanding of how power plays out on the world stage. Without a critical frame, our data illustrated tensions around perspective-taking versus cultural appropriation and solidarity versus white saviorism. Although teachers may have good intentions around developing students' global literacies, without reflexivity, reciprocity, and responsiveness, teachers can unintentionally promote harmful tropes and reproduce power dynamics inside the classroom (Tierney, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Future Directions for Global Meaning-Making Research and Practice

Our findings reveal two important starting places for educators who desire to enhance global literacies and to enact global meaning-making in their classrooms. Firstly, our findings corroborate both Vandeyar (2021) and Yol and Yoon (2019) who found that building relationships, encouraging student voice, and cultivating a safe space for taking risks were foundational for students to engage in global meaning-making. The data showed that teachers situated literacy learning, even global literacies learning, in the local by inviting students to be their whole selves and infuse their rich cultural and ethnic heritages with their literacy learning and making literacy relevant to students' lives by knowing students and their funds of knowledge (Moll, 2019).

Relating our theoretical framework to the data, scholars of cosmopolitanism have offered a perspective called everyday cosmopolitanism (Bayat, 2008). From an everyday cosmopolitan view, embodying global citizenship and enacting global meaning-making need not be a large-scale international project. It can be found in the everyday dispositions, routines, and habits we adopt from a cosmopolitan worldview (Choo, 2020; Hauerwas, Kerkhoff, & Schneider, 2021; Vasudevan, 2014). Relating this philosophy to literacies, the proximal and

reflexive stances can be part of routine instruction. Thinking of global meaning-making in this everyday way may help educators take the first step toward integration. In addition, participants who had a support network of like-minded teachers reported that this helped them overcome political barriers. Future research could examine the barriers to enacting global literacies from a critical cosmopolitan frame, including teacher dispositions, time in the instructional day, knowledge of global systems, and like-minded support networks. Emerging research by the first author has found teachers perceive that the open-ended nature of inquiry can help overcome this challenge as students follow where the evidence leads (Kerkhoff & Cloud, 2020); however, further research is needed to understand how to negotiate open-ended inquiry while also helping students develop critical consciousness. And, we know that critical literacies without praxis does little to make substantial change toward social justice (Byker & Marquardt, 2016; Rodríguez Gómez, 2017). While everyday cosmopolitanism is a starting point, the goal is for all teachers and learners to engage in praxis. However, adopting a moral or socially responsible role, inherent in a cosmopolitan identity is, as Nasir and Kirshner (2003) point out, “constantly negotiated through everyday practice” (p. 139).

CONCLUSION

This study provides findings on how teachers can help students to develop cosmopolitan stances that move beyond ethnocentric thinking, move beyond stereotypes, and move forward their own cultural identities so that students can constructively interact with people from all over the world and engage in global meaning-making. The findings point to the importance of local and global relationships, in other words the importance of cultivating a community of learners inside the classroom and facilitating experiences where students interact with diverse others outside the classroom (face-to-face or virtually). This study may bring awareness to preservice, inservice, and teacher educators as to the curricular choices and instructional processes that promote students’ global meaning-making. Teachers can use the findings to design global meaning-making experiences from a critical cosmopolitan frame. The goal for the study was to explore literacy education to help prepare students for a globally interconnected world. This study is significant as global meaning-making is an increasing concern considering increased nationalism in countries around the world. The global approach helps promote a more comprehensive view of social justice in literacy education.

ADDITIONAL READING MATERIALS

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