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## Incorporating an Image-Based, Multimodal Pedagogy into Global Citizenship Education

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**Abstract**

Drawing on theories and practices in literacy education and in particular, the concepts of semiotics and transmediation, we explored the possibility of arts-based experiences such as Augusto Boal's Image Theatre in facilitating transformation of thinking in the context of global citizenship education. The objectives of this research were twofold. The first was to concretize the notion of an image-based, multimodal pedagogy into a practice-based instructional model, while the second was to provide case-study examples of how our pedagogy was enacted in two undergraduate-level courses with a

global focus. We adopted a participatory-action research design and analyzed data using a grounded theory approach. The data sources for this research included videotaped performing sessions, observation notes, written reflections, end-of-course surveys, photos, artwork, and other student constructed artifacts. The results indicate that Image Theatre and arts-based experiences can expand and deepen student thinking on issues of global citizenship. Implications for pedagogy include increasing the use of arts and theatre for class interactions on traditional readings and themes.

## Incorporating an Image-Based, Multimodal Pedagogy into Global Citizenship Education

Colleges and universities in the US are making increasingly higher commitment to global citizenship education (GCE) by including a global dimension in their core curricula (Camicia & Franklin, 2010). It is undeniable that today's college graduates must be prepared with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to be successful in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. Due to the multifaceted nature of GCE and the breadth of issues it potentially covers, global citizenship educators are facing the daunting task of developing and implementing pedagogies that are suitable and effective at the college level.

### *Perspectives on GCE*

In the context of higher education, educators approach the teaching of global citizenship from a wide range of theoretical and methodological perspectives (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014). The first perspective is neoliberal, which privileges individualism, competition, and social mobility. This approach tends to celebrate a single, global market system and principles of free trade. A global citizen in this perspective is a successful and competitive individual in a globalized economy driven by capitalist ideologies and technological revolutions. The neoliberal perspective is often criticized for its post-colonial tendency of seeing globalization as an attempt to impose post-colonial Western values onto non-Western contexts (Andreotti, 2006). Such critiques target the implied imperialism in the approach as reflected in the development discourse urging the Third World to "catch up" with the First World as being more "civilized" or globalized. Andreotti espouses a critical approach that demystifies the structural inequalities in the global economic system that perpetuates poverty and status quo and maintains exploitation of the underprivileged. Drawing on the distinction between neoliberal and "critical" approaches to GCE, Eidoo et al. (2011) propose a framework for GCE from a critical interdisciplinary perspective that gives more attention to themes of "identity, difference, and critical reflexivity" (p. 61). In particular, Eidoo et al. lay out five principles for their approach: a) critically understand globalization and interrogate global hierarchical power relations; b) work with a broad and deep concept of citizenship learning; c) adopt a caring, self-critical, and reflexive approach to how individuals, groups and nations are implicated in local and global programs; d) engage in intercultural perspectives and diversity through critical literacy; and e) use and engage citizen agency (p. 64).

Camicia and Franklin (2011) point out that the neoliberal and critical approach to GCE should not be viewed as completely binary or opposite to each other. They are sometimes "blended, complex, and embedded in a dynamic network of power relations" (p. 314). While global citizenship educators tend to agree that students should be prepared for participating in democracy actively as global citizens, what constitutes as GCE "is complicated by a tension and blending between neo-liberal and critical democratic discourses" (p. 321).

In our teaching, we feel somewhat obligated to emphasize the critical perspective to GCE, in order to counterbalance the dominant neoliberal discourses in the media and on university campuses; meanwhile, hoping to cultivate in students a transformative view predicated on common challenges facing the human race. While keenly aware of the structural inequalities between the Global North and South, transformative educators aim at shifting the focus from such geo-political divisions as First World vs. Third World to a perspective on socio-economic division that cuts across nations and regions. The emphasis is on forging a solidarity among global citizens in order to work toward a more just, equitable, democratic, sustainable, and peaceful world (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014; Shultz, 2007).

*Affective GCE*

Many discussions about GCE focus on the intellectual or cognitive domain, which involves knowledge of what is going on in the wider world economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically, and environmentally. However, well-rounded GCE must also attend to an attitude domain, which includes valuing diversity and social justice, as well as an action domain, which emphasizes contributions to communities at both the local and global levels. While a purely intellectual approach is often neutral, detached, and objective; a holistic and aesthetic pedagogy is required for *affective GCE*, a concept proposed by Hung (2010), which offers a "more inclusive and more open public sphere" that enables "citizens to think and act rationally as well as being caring, sensitive, and perceptive" (p. 488). This pedagogy is characterized by its emphasis on individualized, private, and embodied experiences in building citizenship (Hung, 2010). In our practices, we seek to join the cognitive and affect aspects of GCE through holistic and aesthetic pedagogical approaches to coordinate these two aspects in an integrated, complementary process.

In order to actively participate in global society, knowledge about global issues and skills in solving global problems are necessary but often not sufficient. Active participation also requires passion and sensitivity toward critical issues. It is also important to develop creative problem solving skills, originality, and imagination. Hung (2010) stresses that affective citizenship does not replace rationality but is supposed to enrich the meaning of citizenship by including "bodily experiences, individual idiosyncrasies, feelings, emotions, and imagination

as parts of citizenship" (p. 496). Therefore, affective citizenship education requires a holistic approach that not only encourages critical thinking and moral reasoning, but also incorporates "individual bodily experiences as significant elements in identifying issues, in problem-solving and policy-making" (p. 497). The outcome of global education is for students to feel empowered for action (Appleyard & McLean, 2011). GCE seeks to instill in students attitudes of optimism and hope for a world that is more peaceful, just, and democratic. Sometimes, when global educators introduce students to the darker side of global outsourcing, exploitation, and dislocation, we should be careful not to give students the impression of helplessness as if these problems are inherently unsolvable.

To accompany the affective conception of GCE, Hung (2010) proposes an aesthetic pedagogy, which includes learning and teaching through multiple artistic media, in order to enhance the affective aspects of global education: empathy, sensitivity, compassion. Various art forms have unique compatibilities with affective citizenship education because they open up students' minds to new perspectives and understandings (Greene, 1995). In Image Theatre, in particular, students engage in creative process through expressing abstract ideas using their own bodies. In searching for a pedagogy that is compatible with well-rounded GCE, including all three domains discussed above: intellectual, affective, and active; we have found promise in an image-based, multimodal pedagogy, inspired by various critical literacy practices, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section, and particularly, by Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (TO, 1985).

## Theoretical Background

### *Multimodality in Literacy Practices*

"It is the time of multimodality," Siegel (2012, p.67) declares. The verbocentric literacy practices in conventional schooling and the privileged status of language have been challenged since the New London Group (1996) published their *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies*. In particular, the group proposes a new type of pedagogy that embraces learners as "active designers of meaning" who are fluent with the full range of design elements or modes of meaning making, (including visual, auditory, gestural, and spatial), in order to successfully navigate the diversities of texts, practices, and social relations that are part of their public and private lives in "new times" (p. 71). In other words, multiliteracies are calls to educators to rethink pedagogy in light of the plurality of "texts" and to develop a semiotic toolkit that captures the contemporary social landscape (Siegel, 2012).

*Arts and literacy.* In cognitive science research, the arts have been connected with higher level thinking, problem-solving skills, and kinetic learning styles (Holdren, 2012). Multimodal literacy has found support in both neurological and cultural bases (Gardner, 1983); and, multimodal curricula (Suhor, 1984) can unleash a potentially wide range of skills and

abilities—cognitive, aesthetic, and psychomotor—that are not possible in traditional classrooms, conveying nonlinguistic representations of emotional and aesthetic thoughts. Experiencing ideas in multiple ways broadens thought, deepens understanding and releases imagination (Greene, 1995).

Art has always been a major component of literacy curricula. Whitin (e.g., 2005) and others have experimented with integrating multimedia including the arts with literacy education. In addition, Orzulak (2006) demonstrates how theatre-based practices can also be used to enhance learning and teaching about Islam. However, integration of arts-based strategies are more widely discussed and written in the context of K-12 classrooms and especially in elementary education, while the potential of an arts-based pedagogy in higher education is left untapped. In our review of literature, however, we have discovered that the arts and literature could be excellent companions for GCE for older learners, especially for cultivating the critical and affective aspects of global citizenship.

The idea of mediation is central to semiotic conception of literacy, and based on Vygotskian theorists' work on mediation (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978), Moll (2014) identified five classes of mediators, two of which—semiotic mediation and anatomical mediation—are particularly important to the image-based, multimodal pedagogy we applied to GCE. In a nutshell, semiotic mediation involves the use of symbolic tools or signs such as language, writing, art, and mathematics; anatomical mediation, on the other hand, involves the use of body, such as hands and arms to manipulate and represent the environment and social life. In our instruction, we were particularly interested in how anatomical and semiotic mediations join together to enrich learning.

Literacy scholars have built a case for integrating bodily resources in learning. For example, Woodcock (2010) notes that "emotion happens in the body," and "we learn more effectively in an emotional, embodied manner" (p. 378). Performing arts connect affect and cognition to inject increased energy and create enduring memory and retention of knowledge. Multimodal learning is a combination of multiple semiotic resources in the social practices of learning (Siegel, 2012), and multimodalities can tap the full range of learners' potential or intelligence to step out of their comfort zones and see new possibilities of interpretation and action. Moreover, experiencing the body as an anatomical mediator has a greater potential than other mediational tools to develop empathetic understanding (Chisholm & Whitmore, 2016).

*Semiotics and transmediation.* Semiotics is the study of signs, which can be understood as representations of the physical world that makes it possible for us to convey and receive meaning (Suhor, 1984). Semiotics is particularly suited to understanding multimodality because it does not privilege language over other sign systems and thus has become a "friendly" concept for educators who integrate the arts into their curricula. Semiotic theory,

according to Whitin (2005), posits that humans experience the world directly through the senses with no direct translation of experience, which runs counter to the common verbocentric focus of the school curriculum.

Transmediation is a literacy strategy in which learners retranslate their understanding of ideas, concepts, or texts through other media and occurs "when students interpret texts that originate in one sign system and recast that meaning into another sign system" (Chisholm & Whitmore, 2016, p. 3). In our practice, students were first assigned to read a selection of literature (fictional or theoretical), then engage in face-to-face or online discussions (processes involving their construction and interpretation of textual meaning, mostly in writing), and finally recast their meaning-making into an art form, in particular, Image Theatre, or sometimes in drawings.

It should be noted that transmediation is not a simple process of reiteration of meaning from one sign system to another. In other words, taking understandings created in one sign system and mapping them onto another system is not a simple, literal transfer. Instead, transmediating understandings across semiotic systems expands perspectives, extends the interpretative potential of texts, and forges new connections. This generative and reflective power of transmediation is the unique contributions of each sign system to the learning process (Chisholm & Whitmore, 2016; Whitin, 2005). For instance, meaning that is expressed through performance art is not just a replication of what is expressed through language. Language follows a linear structure expressed through discourse while visual representations convey meanings as a gestalt and highlight relationships (Whitin, 2005). The reason why new understandings are often generated is because there is no dictionary translation to rely on when students represent language in images or postures and they must invent such a connection, continuing to interrogate themselves with the question why this image explains and enhances the meanings in the text (Holdern, 2012); in other words, they must engage in reasoning and critical thinking. Image Theatre introduced later in this paper is not a literal transmediation; it is imaginative because there is no prescribed formula for students to follow in the process of translating written language into bodily images.

Since the signs we create allow us to communicate with each other in order to make sense of our world, in our practices, transmediation is a generative cognitive process as well as a socio-cultural process. Whitin (2005) observes that when visual representations are constructed in groups collaboratively, transmediation's generative power is especially obvious because students debate, revise, and revisit the literature; that is, the representation is not treated as a final product, but as a mediational tool for further discussion, deeper understanding, and new perspective. Sculpted images as in the Image Theatre, as socially negotiated images, are particularly transformative, since they offer metaphorical representation and exploratory talk, two practices linked to the transmediation strategy (Whitin, 2005). They also support literary

interpretation of difficult texts and of critical thinking. Literacy studies have increasingly recognized the potential of sign and tool systems in raising consciousness and generating creative representations that are traditionally limited and credited to language-based sign systems alone.

*Connecting multimodal literacy practices to GCE*. Chisholm and Whitmore (2016) noted that arts-based, embodied literacy practices support students' sense making about complex narratives. GCE often encompasses complex topics full of controversies. Students come to our classes with misconceptions and tendencies to overgeneralize and stereotype, often discussing issues in terms of "us" versus "them," and demonstrating vulnerabilities toward egocentric thinking and lack of empathy. McCormick (2011) found that translation from one medium to another forces students to confront the ambiguity of complex texts. The course taught by Orzulak (2006) showed that theatre exercise in particular is effective in terms of helping students to engage in conceptual information and to tackle controversial, complex issues and texts. And in courses that focus on GCE, students tend to experience conflicting feelings about cultures and religions that are different from their own. The arts provide students with a safer environment to explore highly contested and controversial issues such as war and religion.

### *The Theatre of the Oppressed*

We have applied Brazilian director and activist Augusto Boal's Image Theatre forum over the last three years in the context of undergraduate courses. Image Theatre was first developed by Boal (1985) as part of the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), which in turn is a set of theatrical forums and techniques developed in the 1960s inspired by Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970).

Boal (1995) described "spectators" as "passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon" and sought to change them into "subjects, actors, transformers of the dramatic action" (p.122). He particularly criticized the classical theatre of Aristotle, which Boal described as considering the audience as passive spectators who delegate the power to dramatic characters to think and act for them. In contrast, Boal considers the theatre of German playwright Bertolt Brecht, as providing the audience with opportunities to delegate power to characters who act for them but in the end reserve the right to think for themselves. In the first case, a "catharsis" occurs; in the second, an awakening of critical consciousness occurs. In TO, the audience delegates no power to the character (or actor) to act or think in their places; rather the audience takes over the process of making meaning by playing the role of protagonists.

Boal's techniques and forums are intended for the audience and participants to recognize, analyze, and confront social issues such as oppression and disfranchisement through active

involvement rather than passive reception. TO has been widely adopted to examine issues of power, ideological conflict, inequality, social injustice, oppression, and racism (Powell & Serriere, 2013). For instance, Fisher (1994) has found that TO when used in conjunction with feminist pedagogy enhances critical thinking and reflection.

In Image Theatre, participants create static or freeze sculptures with their bodies that "uncover essential truth about societies and cultures without resorting to spoken language" (Boal, 1995, p. xix). The purpose is to leave language temporarily behind and prioritize the fluidly visual and the kinesthetic. In the case of TO in GCE the power of images and non-verbal communication as expressed through the Image Theatre helps the participants to explore their own responses to various forms of oppression in a safer space (Fisher, 1994). In this sense, an image-based, multimodal pedagogy (Powell & Serriere, 2013), due to its collaborative nature, seems to be a provocative tool for promoting critical thinking and discussion in students who might otherwise not feel confident enough to articulate their political views.

The objective of this research is twofold. First is to concretize the notion of image-based, multimodal pedagogy into a practice-based instructional model. Second is to provide case study examples of how this model was applied in two undergraduate-level courses with a global focus. Through this action research, we will describe, analyze, and reflect on our experience of incorporating Boal's (1985) Image Theatre in two college-level core curriculum courses. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, we chose a participant-observer, ethnographic qualitative design that addressed one open-ended research question: How does image-based collaborative inquiry in the form of Image Theatre affect students' conceptual understandings of, and attitudes toward the various political, social, and cultural issues pertaining to GCE?

## Method

As many researchers who practice arts-based research do, we intentionally blurred the line between pedagogy and research (Leavy, 2015; Powell & Serriere, 2013). Our rationale was premised on the belief that arts-based pedagogies have the capacity to generate new knowledge for both teaching and scholarship in a holistic manner.

### *Participants and Contexts*

The participants were liberal arts college students enrolled in two introductory courses, *Globalization, Cultures, & Education*, co-taught by authors [1&2]; and *Cultures & Youth of the Middle East*, taught by author[2]. Over 90% of the students were of European-American descent. A little over half of the students were females, and the rest were males. The first course focused on global interconnectedness and interdependence; sustainability, diverse cultural values and perspectives; cultural identity and pluralism; equality of educational

opportunity; and comparative education, focusing on comparing systems, practices, and learning styles across the globe. Students read selected works on a variety of topics related to globalization, including authors such as Thomas Friedman, Naomi Klein, Joseph Stiglitz, Arturo Escobar, Bill McKibben, Vandana Shiva, Stuart Hall, Jagdish Bhagwati, and Immanuel Wallerstein.

*Cultures & Youth of the Middle East* was a course designed by author[2] aimed at revealing selected aspects of cultural, socio-historical (political), and linguistic traditions and practices of the Middle East by introducing examples of literary, cinematic, musical, artistic, culinary, and other forms of human expression produced by the people of this region. Students read young adult literature such as *Persepolis* and *Zahra's Paradise* and watched films such as *The Iran Job*.

### *Procedures*

Implementing Image Theatre divided students into groups of seven or eight which were asked to create an initial image based on a prompt and then demonstrate their image in front of the class. A Q&A session followed, and then students were given the opportunities to discuss in their groups about how to revise their initial images by a second prompt. Then students demonstrated their revised images with justification. The actual performance usually took two class periods, each lasting about 105 minutes. Finally, students wrote their reflections on the readings and activities in a "think piece." Examples of prompts include: "What do you think and feel of your group's image?" "Does it match your conception of globalization?" "Is this a real or ideal image of globalization?" "How might you change the image to better reflect your conceptions of globalization?" "Does participation in the activity change or help you better understand globalization?" Finally, students were asked to represent the globalization through a variety of other creative expressions such as drawings or re-enactments of novel scenes using freeze frames.

Collaborative visual response was the focus of this research, and so students were asked to work together in small groups to decide on and develop one image per group, reflecting understandings of the assigned texts. We modeled Boal's (1995) use of warm-up games and exercises to build trust and comfort to "demechanize" bodies by engaging them in unknown and unusual movements. Since the non-verbal nature of Image Theatre does not allow for rich political discussions, we found it helpful to let students first brainstorm a list of concepts or words to represent the core ideas of globalization that they were then asked to portray (Powell & Serriere, 2013).

### *Data Sources and Analysis*

This action research was designed to identify effective teaching elements and features of classroom environment that predicated upon an affective, multimodal, semiotic pedagogy of GCE. The data sources for this research include video-taped performing sessions, observation notes, written reflections, end-of-course survey, photos, artwork, and other student constructed artifacts. The data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) followed by peer debriefings. In addition, we relied heavily on the concept of transmediation in literacy education as an analytical tool to help diagnose and interpret students' sculpted images and their discussions. Our analysis of data particularly focused on the *generative* and *reflective* power of transmediation as discussed in an earlier section of this paper. The sculpted representations created by the students as visual responses to either literary or theoretical texts were treated as media for further discussions or mediational tools for gaining new perspectives. Therefore, our analysis focused on how Image Theatre, as the central component of an image-based, multimodal pedagogy, led students to new understandings of global issues (generative power) and engagement in the reflections on the readings (reflective power).

Finally, we adhered to a constructivist perspective that visual images do not portray reality, but only the producers' and viewers' co-constructed and negotiated understandings (Burr, 2004). Aware of the role of our own past experience in shaping our construction of the meaning, we used triangulation across different types of data, going back and forth between written texts and visual images based on the constant comparative method laid out by Miles and Huberman (1994).

## Findings

### *Case One: Image Representations of Globalization*

The initial images were created in the 6th week of the course *Globalization, Cultures & Education*; the revised images were created in the last week of the course.

*Initial images.* Several themes were popular in the students' initial images about globalization. The first were flow or exchange of ideas, unity, and interconnectedness. When transforming these themes into poses, the students typically chose to form circles to signify unity. Some also chose to extend their arms to show acceptance and openness. One student explained her pose like this:

> I held the whole world in my hands. This to me represents globalization in many ways … it shows the interconnectedness that comes from globalization.

When asked what and how globalization brought people together, students usually cited the impacts of technology and the Internet, as well as economics, as major forces, and how they were affected by globalization as world travelers and consumers. A few students also expressed worries or concerns of losing jobs after graduation to foreigners due to outsourcing. Some students were also sensitive to cultural impacts and mentioned the movement of peoples and population migration:

> You have to be more aware of other cultures, traditions, and customs because you will have to be able to work with people of all different backgrounds....you must show their culture respect.

Occasionally, students pointed out that globalization connects not only people but also "problems." For instance:

> Globalization means to me that every issue in the world is not contained in a certain area, or city, or country…the problems in one place affect countries all over the world in one way or another.

As a preparation for the Image Theatre, we asked students to create picture images about globalization. One drawing that stood out had a big circle symbolizing the earth surrounded by several little national flags, all of which belonged to the Group of Eight. When asked, "Where is the rest of the world?" The students in the group were a little embarrassed, but simply stated that their choices were "arbitrary." To some extent, although perhaps unintentionally, this image reflects the concerns of the international community over homogenization and Westernization of culture, which puts cultural diversity and marginalized cultures, especially indigenous peoples, at risk. The meanings conveyed through the above drawing were also corroborated by the students' written reflections. For instance, one student stated that "globalization is a process by which the culture of the world becomes uniform." Another was able to connect the idea of unity with the concept of "melting pot" and stated: "globalization, means everyone across the world becoming more connected and unified in certain aspects where they have been divided before."

We were not surprised that the initial images reflected neoliberal versions of globalization commonly conveyed in mainstream media. There was also a tendency for the students to portray all forms of globalization as economic. In addition, the initial images tended to project cultural differences as superficial and neutral since many students accept globalization in general as good without considering complex and mixed impacts on cultural identities.

*Revised images.* In contrast, the revised images either accentuated the marginalized, critical discourse of globalization or represented a rather blended version of discourses. In particular,

the students clearly emphasized power relations and expressed concerns over issues such as social justice and structural inequality.

"United Front"

"Twisted Tangle"

*Figure 1*. Students using Image Theatre to construct the concept of "globalization."

In Figure 1, we present two student sculptures representing globalization. The students named the sculpture in the top panel "United Front" in which the group formed an alliance by locking arms with each other. One student was trapped inside a wall, and another was trying to save

her but had difficulty because the others prevented anyone from entering or exiting. She stated:

> The parties in control of globalization possess strong bonds that allow them to work together for extended periods of time. The person on the inside of the circle represented those parties that work within the process of globalization but long to free themselves. The person on the outside represented the forces that deny globalization and hope to remain individuals in their holdings. This applies to how certain countries may feel pressured to continue working in the forces of globalization rather than remain isolated.

The students who were part of the alliance countered that their group aimed at achieving a more balanced portrayal of globalization, explaining that although certainly oppression does take place, with some dominant, richer, mainly Western countries exploiting other smaller, nonwhite, and indigenous cultures, globalization, has also brought about arguably positive outcomes such as increased trade, cultural exchange, health care, food efficiency, and liberation politics.

The bottom panel of Figure 1 depicts the group sculpture named "Twisted Tangle" in which the majority formed a twisted base with yoga- like poses with two students on top and another covering his eyes. The students explained that the twisted base represented both solidarity and the complex dynamics among the people who globalize from below, while the two students on top represented the multinational corporations and non-government organizations (NGOs), who do not see their oppressive behavior toward those from below.

Two themes stood out in this image: "interconnectedness" and "transformation." A student explains:

> Everyone was in some way pushing against or connected to someone else in the image. There were two people standing, pushing down, and looking away from the others, while the other five were either laying down [sic] or kneeling. This was meant to show the oppression brought upon by globalization, but also . . . how everyone is in some way connected.

Overall the students' revised images toward the end of the semester reflected a more critical and complex views of globalization than their initial images.

***Case Two: Conflicts in the Middle East***

The initial and revised images were created during the 6th and 7th weeks of the course, *Cultures & Youth of the Middle East*, with about one week in between the two Image Theatres which were both embedded in a unit focusing on Iraqi youth lives and culture. Figure 2 depicts the pre- and post-images created by two groups of students in the course. The panels on the left are the initial images; those on the right are the revised.

*Group One's images.* Group One was asked to create an image to represent Iraqi youths' beliefs about Americans' views toward them and Iraqi culture. The central theme of Group One's initial image (top left panel in Figure 2) was to portray an aloof or indifferent attitude toward what happened in Iraq and toward international relations, which, the group explained, was a reflection of what they had observed among the American youth like themselves. One male student had his hands in his pockets, acting as if what's going on in the violent scene was none of his business. Another chose to play video games on his cellphone, ignoring the violence and conflict. We found this initial image very insightful and reflective. In facilitating

*Figure 2*. Initial and revised images on the conflicts in the Middle East.

the revision of their initial image, we encouraged this group to think of an alternative scene in which individuals did take on the responsibilities expected of global citizenship, asking the group to answer the following questions: Does each individual as a citizen have a say in his or her country's international policies? If American citizens decide to take responsibilities and put individual effort to improve the situation in the Middle East or the relationship between the United States and the countries in the Middle East, how would the change be reflected in your image?

In their final image (top right panel in Figure 2), the first group chose to not "go completely positive," in their own words, and left the original violent scene in the image. They also chose to have one student still act as a by-stander, arguing that there are always indifferent people. However, one female student posed as a voter who was letting her voice be heard; one male student suggested that he and another female student should pose as people arguing or debating about the situation in the Middle East; still another male student proposed to keep the cellphone as a manipulative, but this time, instead of playing with it, the character used the phone to document the violent scene and report it to the world.

*Group Two's images.* We asked Group Two to create a group sculpture/still image that represented their conceptual understanding of the internal conflict among the Iraqis regarding the relationship between the Muslim world and the West. As shown in the bottom left panel in Figure 2, students in this group also chose to place a violent scene at the center of their image. Coincidentally or not, the Iraqis, like the American youth portrayed in the initial image by Group One, also acted as bystanders. Instead of expressing an aloof and distant attitude toward the scene, the Iraqi eye-witnesses were portrayed as dumbfounded and speechless in the scene. For instance, one female student shrugged her shoulders while raising her outstretched hands as if to show "I can do nothing about it."

For this group, we asked the students to revisit some of the literature they read in the course which revealed and explained the conflicting views among Iraqis. In their final image (bottom right panel in Figure 2), the second group kept the violent scene but decided to change the roles of the eye-witnesses to have two students kneeling down and weeping, with two other students demonstrating they were ready to fight, and two other students holding these two back, creating a living tension. They explained that the two latter students represented people who were vehemently against dealing with the issues between the West and the Muslim world by military force or violence.

A common theme across both groups' debriefing sessions was their initial lack of consideration of the violence committed by ISIS or Saddam Hussein against their own civilians. The students also recalled how surprised they were when they found out that many

Iraqi people held positive views about the United States. One student wrote: "A positive view of the United States is something I never would have thought of simply because we always see anti-American sentiment on the news." It appears that the Image Theater activity helped the students grasp the complexity surrounding the relationship between the West and the Muslim world.

### The Effects of Image Theatre on Student Learning Based on Student Feedback

*The generative power of Image Theatre.* The Image Theatre activities exposed students to multiple perspectives and interpretations. Through opening dialogues and stimulating intellectual discussions, the Image Theatre activities deepened and expanded students' understandings of various global issues.

The written reflection ("think piece") by a female student in the group that created the "United Front" image vividly demonstrated how the Image Theatre opened dialogues and helped students see different sides of globalization. She shared:

> Participating in the Image Theatre activity greatly helped me understand globalization as a whole. I always viewed globalization as a positive thing … Now after this activity, I seem to be torn as to which side I should take in the debate.

This student's reflection was based on her observation that the group's revised images incorporated darker or more complex pictures of globalization. Although we acknowledge that such conceptual changes could also have happened through completing the reading assignments during this course, we also note that conceptual shifts usually were more authentic when these students were given the opportunities to discuss with their peers alternative perspectives expressed through the sculpted images, as corroborated by this observation:

> It really opened my eyes of some of the aspects that I have never taken the time to focus on. For instance, the fact that so many of the smaller countries are truly bullied by larger, more powerful countries was something I never really considered. Although we had discussed this in class, something about seeing this acted out by my classmates really made it click in my mind.

The reactions from the students enrolled in the *Cultures & Youth of the Middle East* course were highly comparable to those from the globalization course. For example, "The theatre opened my eyes to the fact that every conflict has various sides and viewpoints that make it complex and difficult to fully and accurately absorb." Another student reflected, "Image Theatre … was very eye-opening to see Iraqi-Iraqi relationships as well as Iraqi-American

relationships portrayed." Another realized that, "It is not fair to make a general assumption about a group of people." Many students in the course pointed out that the opportunities to share ideas with classmates was the most impressive feature of the Image Theatre activity. For example:

> The most influential point of it [Image Theatre] was being able to share and listen to everyone's views and opinions. That allowed me to consider the views of my classmates and then allow me to form more information-based opinions of my own.

*Affective citizenship education in action*. One significant theme we have learned from the Image Theatre activities is the strength of embodied understanding. The following student's reflection seemed to have truly captured the spirit of TO as envisioned by Augusto Boal himself:

> The Image Theatre does help my understanding a little bit better because it actually gets my body into the thought process as well. Thinking and talking about globalization and its pros and cons is all well and good, but taking the extra step forward to put that thought into physical being adds an extra step.

Some students, while portraying the power relationships, shared that posing as the powerful counterpart brought out "a feeling of shame," while on the other hand, some students reflected that putting themselves in the position of the powerless helped them to really imagine the struggle and the emotions they have daily, a clear gain of empathy. Through performing and acting, the students not only grew cognitively in terms of deepening their understandings of globalization, but also invested their emotions in the learning process.

Students' responses were also consistent with the literature on multimodal literacy reviewed in an earlier section. In particular, the Image Theatre activities were very well received by those students who self-identified as visual and tactile learners. For instance:

> Because I am a visual learner, while text and verbal speaking sometimes seem to be vague and unrealistic, seeing my peers display their depictions with their own takes gave me the chance to see what my classmates …view the various conflicts.

Participating in theatre also evoked the desire to act in reality. For instance, one student stated:

> I feel that I understand more way I am able to take action in these events, whether to help people understand and learn through the use of modern technology, or through the direct conversations with groups affected or able to enact change, or even take political action to make a difference.

Another student also felt that being able to revise their original image has given some hope for the relationships between the US and the Middle East: "Changed scenes made me look at their relationship more positively because it was more of how the majority of the population would act."

*Increased participation through trust and community building.* The image-based, multimodal collaborative inquiry increased participation from all the students. Although we offered the Image Theatre as a voluntary activity to these classes, all of the students chose to be part of the group image. As we facilitated the group discussions during the revisions of the initial images, we found that almost all the students contributed ideas to the target image. Often, the students offered specific ideas about their own roles in the image.

The reason behind increased participation is not surprising since the justification of using bodies to sculpt a concept sometimes is to release the pressure to verbalize one's thoughts. Some of the students expressed anxiety about articulating their thoughts about complex topics such as globalization and cultural identities but found that articulation through imagery, body movements, or musical sound, was easier than expressing thoughts through spoken or written text. For instance, one student wrote, "the activity also made me become more active in class which helped me take in the information." From our perspective as global citizenship educators, we want to involve as many students as possible in classroom discussions and want to make the content accessible to all of our students. We also believe that it is beneficial for students to master a range of "languages" to express themselves and to step out of their comfort zone.

## Discussion

Through this action research, we hope to make the following unique scientific and scholarly contributions to arts-based research and practices. First, traditional GCE has relied on the intellectual approach only. In this research, the traditional intellectual approach is enriched through an arts-based, multimodal pedagogy, which adds an affective dimension to GCE. Second, we propose a practice-based model (see Figure 3), which can be replicated in other issue-centered courses.

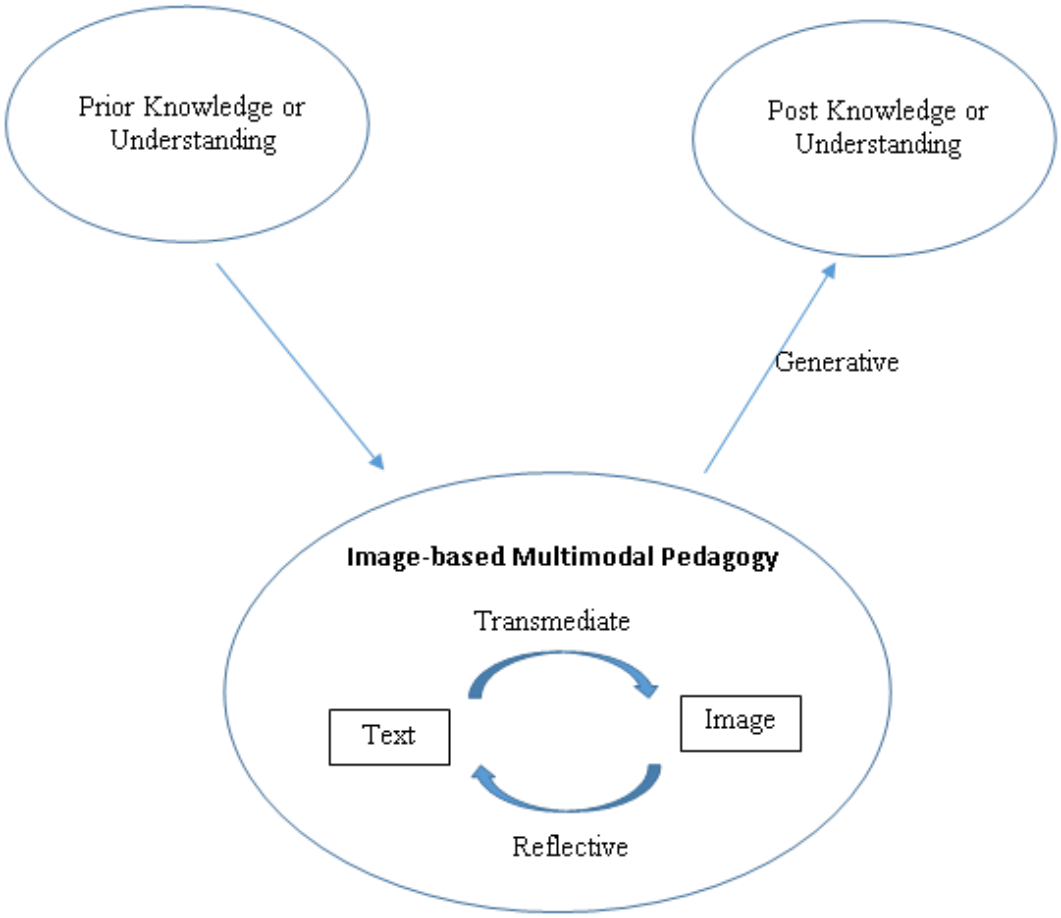


*Figure 3*. The process of transmediation in an image-based, multimodal pedagogy.

Adaptation of TO to classroom settings is not a literal replication. It depends on the context. Although we were inspired by Boal's ideas, we did not keep the verbal communications minimal. Instead, we used the sculpted images of the students as reference points for furthering classroom discussions. It is important to achieve balance between acting and reflecting. Educators who are interested in incorporating TO into issue-centered courses should weave group discussions into TO and with a reflective piece, like we used in this study. While the images that students create can be thought-provoking, the gist of the TO activity lies in the discussions generated during the creation and revision of images, as well as in the subsequent reflections. Furthermore, we encourage educators to merge arts-based techniques, from autobiographical writings, to movies, to music and dance, and to arts-based research projects in order to further cultivate reflection and critical thinking.

Secondly, from the numerous examples presented earlier in this report, educators can clearly see the power of embodied understanding. However, arts educators must address the traditional distrust of the body over the mind in academia. Latta and Buck (2006) have encountered resistance of embodied practices in teacher education, describing many educators

as struggling "to imagine…and trust with the body as the medium for sense making," and that embodied practices in reality were often "met with skepticism by some, dismissed as romanticism and idealism by others, and experienced as estranged, but somehow resonant, with a few" (p. 316). In our application of Image Theatre to GCE, we often had to first remove the skepticism toward the approach from our own students but were pleased to discover more openness in reflection.

The instructor must also take caution against using the Image Theatre as merely a "fun activity," or as a tool that unwittingly re-presents or re-privileges dominant ideas. Careful facilitation is key to successful implementation. Instructors should consider confronting and challenging student thinking by requesting justifications and clarifications. We considered our roles as facilitating discussions and providing scaffolding prompts, oftentimes playing the devil's advocate. We heeded Greene's (1995) caution that instructors should not use arts as purely a motivational tool, and unwittingly plant the image of arts as oppositional to cognitive, rigorous, analytical, rational, and serious study. We were pleasantly surprised by these student comments:

> When you are forming your images you really have to think about the position of the subject and how you can best represent them. In order to do that you must be extremely knowledgeable on the subject, a task few can accomplish.

It seems that this student was able to grasp the essence of Image Theatre. Arts require rigor, and meaningfully designed, arts-based experiences are not only cognitively challenging but also emotionally demanding.

Finally, in applying TO, arts-based educators have to also overcome their own fears of students' abilities to initiate and sustain meaningful dialogues. Arts-based educators must be prepared for ambiguity because outcomes can be difficult to analyze by objective measures.

## Conclusions

Why are the arts so effective for opening new ideas and inviting to new interpretations? Leavy (2015) notes that the arts can grab people's attention in unique ways because they are captivating, provocative, and moving. More specifically, the arts sometimes are able to capture the emotional aspects of social life that often are not accessible to other forms of expressions. The dramatic expressions often connect with audiences on a deeper, emotional level that evokes feelings such as passion, compassion, sympathy, and empathetic understanding. In social justice curricula, the arts can have the unique power to reveal power relations, raise critical consciousness, build solidarities, and challenge dominant ideologies. We are pleased that through the Image Theatre technique, we were able to steer our students

away from dichotomous, reductionist ways of thinking, and to open their minds to more perspectives.

We have found that one of the challenges in teaching with a global focus is students' lack of background knowledge about the people in the non-Western cultures. Using Image Theatre breathes life into events, issues, and people in course readings and offers students a platform for building communities of collaborative inquiry. By using live theatre as a way of knowing, we hope to, as phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) once stated in his seminal work, *The Primacy of Perception*, open "a route, an experience, which gradually clarifies itself, which gradually rectifies itself and proceeds by dialogue with itself and with others" (p. 21).

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