'Do We Really Need to Know This?'

The challenge of developing a global learning module for trainee teachers

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Abstract

This article explores some of the challenges of developing a module on global learning with primary initial teacher education (ITE) students studying at a UK university. The research, which employed a mixed methodology, involved around 550 students and eight members of staff over a three-year period. The findings indicate that many students developed their thinking about global issues, albeit on a surface level. A small but significant minority proved much harder to reach. The discussion highlights the complexities of global learning, the significance of underlying values and beliefs, and the impact of the wider professional and cultural context. A key issue that emerges is the importance of recognizing barriers and inhibitors to global learning.

Keywords: barriers, controversial issues, environment, global learning

Introduction

This article focuses on the challenges of introducing a new module on global learning in a three-year initial teacher education (ITE) programme at a UK university. The module was introduced in 2009 as an innovation that aimed to respond to changing cultural and social conditions, to prepare students for working in multicultural settings, and to explore issues relating to sustainability and the environment. It was argued that in the modern world, teachers need to engage with and develop an understanding of global issues if they are to be effective classroom practitioners. At the same time, international perspectives were being highlighted across the university as a strategic priority. This was, therefore, a favourable context in which to introduce a new module with a global focus.

'Global learning' is often seen as an ambiguous term that is interpreted in different ways. Put simply, it represents an approach that highlights the importance of international perspectives and engagement with other people and cultures. Unlike global citizenship, which has specific cognitive objectives and is thus sometimes regarded as a discrete subject, global learning spans all areas of the curriculum and focuses more on exploring concepts than mastering content. The way that people are connected to each other around the world and the way that they relate to the planet which supports them are two of its central concerns. Implicit in the notion of global learning is a commitment to interactive and participatory pedagogies. Games, simulations, discussions, and practical group-work activities are favoured as they can be particularly effective in helping to promote questioning and critical stances (Hicks and Holden, 2007; Shah and Brown, 2009; Hunt, 2012). In this paper, the terms 'global learning', 'global dimension', and 'global education' are used interchangeably to describe a way of working that breaks the bounds of traditional academic disciplines and alerts students to some of the pressing issues that effect the planet in the twenty-first century.

The research was conducted over a three-year period. Initially the focus was on the overall impact of the module and the opportunities for students to introduce a global dimension into their school practice. However, it was apparent even from the outset that while many students were engaging with enthusiasm, others were either lukewarm or even hostile. It seemed important to find out why these students were responding negatively. Could it be that the tutors' enthusiasm for what they were doing was blinding them to the way their sessions were being received? To what extent were students really changing their views as a result of what they were learning? And could it be that those students who were displaying hostility to the module were actually experiencing the disquiet that often accompanies deep and lasting learning? A better understanding of barriers and inhibitors held out the possibility of revising the module so as to make it more effective in the longer term.

Background and research methodology

The global dimension module is one of six compulsory elements students have to complete in the final year of their undergraduate programme. It consists of 30 hours of tutor contact time, spread over a period of ten weeks and covering topics as varied as globalization, environmental degradation, sustainability, trade, climate change, and comparative education. Full-time tutors and sessional staff opt to contribute to the module by giving lectures and running tutor groups. Most of the students are white females in their early 20s, though more mature students aged 25–40 form a significant minority who bring different experiences and expectations to bear. The intake is predominantly middle class, reflecting the immediate catchment area.

The research was conducted using a mixed methodology (Cresswell, 2006). This approach had the advantage of being sufficiently flexible to take account of timetable pressures and the constraints of everyday life that many ITE tutors experience. Furthermore, it provided different viewpoints and involved the researchers in the creation of multiple perspectives. In the first phase (2009–10), all students in the year group were invited to complete a 'before and after' survey on global learning together with a questionnaire about school practice. Evidence was also gathered from the end-of-term exam and presentations. In the second phase (2010–11), students volunteered to participate in an online questionnaire, a blog, and focus group discussions about their experiences as newly qualified teachers. In the third phase (2011–12), which involved a tutor email debate, student attitude questionnaire, and drop-in sessions, attention shifted to those students who appeared to be rejecting or feeling uncomfortable with the module. A total of around eight tutors and 550 students were involved. All of the data was collected following ethical guidelines with the full permission of the participants, who were made aware of the findings as they became available.

Table 1

	Method	Focus	Date	Number
Phase one **2009–2010**	Likert scale survey	Student attitudes and ideas on global learning at start and end of module	Sept. 2009 and June 2010	250 200
	Questionnaire	Global learning in schools observed by students in their long teaching practice	April 2010	220
	End-of-module presentations/exam	Evaluation of student learning at end of module	June 2010	250
Phase two **2010–2011**	Blog for ex-students	Opportunities for students to promote global learning in their first year of teaching	Autumn 2010	45
	Online questionnaire for ex-students	Review of school themes and topics relating to global learning	Autumn 2010	15
	Focus group discussions for ex-students	Opportunities for students to promote global learning in their first year of teaching	March 2011	6
	Tutor focus group and email exchanges	Tutor feedback from workshops and lectures	July 2010–June 2012	5
Phase three **2011–2012**	Student-attitude questionnaire	Student attitudes and ideas on global learning at start and end of module	Sept. 2011 and June 2012	250 81
	Student drop-in sessions	Exploring barriers and inhibitors identified by tutor focus group	February 2012	7

The research employed a mixed methodology with an increasing focus on barrier and inhibitors over a three-year period.

Pedagogical frameworks

The module was informed by a number of pedagogical perspectives. The framework proposed by Hicks (Hicks and Holden, 2007) was particularly influential. Hicks contends that global education needs to contain a combination of the following four elements:

(a) a focus on issues

(b) a temporal dimension

(c) a spatial dimension

(d) a commitment to holistic working and participatory teaching.

Hicks argues that all of these four elements need to be present in order to create a conceptual framework which recognizes interconnections and enables us to adequately address 'the global condition' (2007: 25). It follows that learning about overseas communities in a decontextualized and one-dimensional manner, while it might be enjoyable and instructive, is not in itself sufficient to constitute good global education. By contrast, a systems view of the world reflects the way that 'everything is connected literally to everything else' (Hicks, 2007: 26) and holds much more meaningful possibilities. Hicks sets out a vision for a form of global education that embraces critical traditions to bring about personal and political change. He argues that this should be embedded within a values framework to result in a socially and environmentally responsible citizenship at a local and global level.

The notion that education should contribute to personal and political change has been systematically critiqued. In particular, Standish (2009, 2012) argues that education needs to have boundaries and that when it strays into the political and social domains, moralizing and indoctrination come to the fore. He decries what he terms the 'moral turn' in geography and other subjects, which he contends manipulates emotions and undermines academic integrity and dispassionate analysis. He also argues that the content of global education will be open to challenge if it appears to be selected for the purpose of exploring predetermined value positions – positions that, incidentally, are examined through partial, Western perspectives. These are timely warnings, which open up a discussion about the purpose of education and the tensions and contradictions that permeate it at present. However, the emphasis that Standish places on teaching objective facts and disinterested theoretical knowledge ultimately serves to undermine his position. Learning is much more than mere knowledge transmission, and understanding is a much more complex process than his thesis admits. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that global education has always had a deep commitment to critical thinking and multiple perspectives. Classifying responses into right and wrong answers is, as Brown (2011) points out,

unlikely to be helpful. Questioning and dialogue have a pivotal position in the teaching of controversial issues and are key features of global learning.

The module was also informed by an understanding of the various stages that students go through as they learn about global issues. Andreotti (2006) makes a useful distinction between 'soft' approaches, which emphasize common humanity and similarities between people around the world, and more critical stances, which require an understanding of historical power relations. More recently, Andreotti (2010) has proposed a model based on postcolonial and post-structuralist theories that map how learners move from a starting point characterized by security and universal certainties to a space where participants feel comfortable with complexity, uncertainty, contingency, and difference. She identifies seven stages along this route and spells out characteristics enabling and disenabling responses for each level, which reflect participants' openness to the learning process itself. She makes it clear that the stages are not hierarchical and recognizes that learners will navigate between different spaces according to the context. Sterling (2011) adopts a similar position when he distinguishes between first-order learning (adaptive learning within accepted boundaries) and second-order learning (challenging assumptions through criticality and reflection). The key point is that adaptive learning is limited by the ceiling imposed by existing modes of thought, whereas critical approaches are underpinned by more open and flexible cognitive structures. It follows that simply finding out about issues can actually prove to be disempowering unless learners are supported in developing deeper and broader thinking.

Phase one findings – overall impact of the module

All of the students enrolled on the module in 2009–10 were invited to respond to a set of statements and questions about the global dimension using a five-point Likert-type scale. Data was collected before the start of the module in September 2009 and at the end of the last session in June 2010. The students were also asked to complete a questionnaire about what they had done in school in April 2010, directly after their long teaching practice. This provided evidence of whether they had been able to apply their ideas in school and of the barriers and challenges that they encountered. Finally, the exam and end-of-module presentations provided additional insights. These assessment activities, being compulsory, were completed by all students. The survey and questionnaire were optional and were returned by 64 per cent and 54 per cent of students respectively.

The survey provided an initial data set, which is discussed below. The themes that emerged helped to inform subsequent research and highlighted issues that were investigated more fully in subsequent years with different cohorts.

(1) *I am aware of the main concepts in global education.*
Before module: 8 per cent agree or strongly agree
After module: 86 per cent agree or strongly agree

The module explored the eight concepts identified by the UK government as underpinning the global dimension that had been widely circulated to schools (DfID, 2005). Not only did students gain increasing knowledge of the concepts as the module developed, some of them used the concepts in their school placement. The concepts that students explored most frequently with children were 'sustainable development' and 'diversity'. The least well used were 'conflict resolution' and 'social justice'. In their written assignments at the end of the module, many students explored the concepts in some depth. They commented almost universally on the variety of definitions. Some found this disturbing and argued that greater clarity was needed. Others recognized (along with Shah, 2009) that the key concepts of the global dimension are both complex and contested. Underpinning the more sophisticated responses was a wider realization that knowledge, rather than being fixed, is, as Andreotti (2010) reminds us, uncertain and contingent. This was probably the first time that these students had attained this level of understanding.

(2) *I am able to explain to children about the concept of sustainable development.*
Before module: 4 per cent agree or strongly agree
After module: 50 per cent agree or strongly agree

One of the challenges in presenting the module was how best to introduce students to the worrying and very serious environmental issues confronting the world at present. This problem also applies to schools, where there is a real danger of frightening young children with alarming information and statistics. Hicks (1998) has warned of the dangers of teaching in such a way that it promotes a state of denial, and Nagel (2005) has drawn attention to the way that environmental education can cause pupils to adopt a state of 'learned helplessness'. The importance of promoting critical and creative engagement was stressed throughout the module. Hope and optimism were given a high priority, not as bland responses to pressing problems but as a philosophical stance that suggests the possibility of empowerment and personal action.

(3) *I have a reasonable knowledge of current world events.*
Before module: 4 per cent agree or strongly agree
After module: 50 per cent agree or strongly agree

The module introduced students to world events through examples in lectures and case studies in seminars and directed tasks. World map knowledge was a special feature, with an entire lecture devoted to bias in cartographic images. The 'before and after' survey suggests growing confidence, but half of the students still felt they

had a poor knowledge of world events at the end of the module. This has significant implications for their future classroom practice. It is widely recognized that teachers need to be confident and well informed if they are to teach about controversial issues (Alexander, 2010; Barnes, 2011; DfE, 2011). There is the added risk, particularly when it comes to global issues, that unquestioning exposure to the dominant discourses of Western culture may actually serve to reinforce rather than undermine negative stereotypes and neocolonial structures. This leads Scheunpflug (2011) to warn of the dangers of oversimplification, and Brown (2011) to argue in favour of multiple perspectives, critical dialogue, and deep self-examination. 'New teachers,' Brown concludes, 'need guidance on how to manage their own values and opinions and avoid oversimplifying an issue, while still making it accessible' (2011: 32).

(4) *I am sensitive to the problems of teaching children about global issues.*
Before module: 37 per cent agree or strongly agree
After module: 78 per cent agree or strongly agree

In their written assignments, many of the students grappled with the political aspects of global issues. They expressed a range of worries and doubts and often fell back on government advice to justify their position. It could be argued that any study of current world issues necessarily involves a political dimension. Questioning the assumptions that underpin our ideas, recognizing that we are all culturally and geographically situated, and acknowledging the theories and philosophies that are often unconsciously embedded in our thinking are all features of meaningful global citizenship education (Shah and Brown, 2009). It follows that rather than trying to avoid controversy, we need to engage with it. The challenge, as Scoffham (2013) argues, is to help students develop strategies that will support them in managing the study of contentious issues effectively in the classroom.

(5) *I don't think it is realistic to involve children in environmental campaigns.*
Before module: 37 per cent agree or strongly agree
After module: 36 per cent agree or strongly agree

The question as to whether it is appropriate to involve children in environmental campaigns was designed to probe further into the challenge of controversial issues, but it attracted rather limited interest. The 'before and after' survey showed little change in the student responses, despite the fact that many came into contact with aspects of direct action and pressure groups during their long teaching practice. For example, approximately a quarter of the placement schools were involved in the Eco-schools award scheme. Others had adopted initiatives such as the 'Walking Bus' or 'Walk on Wednesdays'. Furthermore, a significant number of schools were involved in fund-raising for the victims of a major earthquake that occurred in the middle of the long teaching practice. Students accepted these as legitimate school activities and appeared largely untroubled by the dangers of campaigning and the

possibility that charitable giving can promote patronizing attitudes to less fortunate 'others' (Martin, 2011). There are problems on multiple levels. In a review of the curriculum spanning the past two centuries, Marsden (1987) reminds us that when education becomes associated with 'good causes' it tends to become biased and distorted. Meanwhile there is an interesting argument, put forward by Jickling (2005) and others, that global education is inherently tainted by activism. The fact that most students were unaware of these problems indicates a surface, rather than deep-level, response.

(6) *Did you see any evidence of the global dimension in the school where you worked?*

When they completed the questionnaire after their long teaching practice, students were asked to identify where they had seen the global dimension being taught. Displays and assemblies featured most highly and were mentioned by around 50 per cent of students. Eco-schools, schools links, and charity events were each cited by around 10 per cent. Theme weeks, theme days, and special topics ranging from Chinese New Year to Hinduism were also mentioned by smaller numbers. Significantly, 15 per cent of students said they saw no evidence of the global dimension at all. The overall impression is that global learning has to be smuggled into lessons on the back of topics and approaches that have already been sanctioned for different reasons. Furthermore, even when schools are committed to global learning, there appear to be dangers. One recent Ofsted report, for example, notes that learning about different countries often focused on difference and provided primary school pupils with 'an over-simplified or stereotypical view' that failed to enhance their understanding (Ofsted, 2011: para 113).

(7) *Were there any barriers to teaching the global dimension in your school?*

This question elicited some of the most interesting responses to emerge from the research. On a positive note, the students reported that in 20 per cent of schools there appeared to be no barriers at all. However, the broader picture was less encouraging. In around a third of schools, the pressure of SATs (standard assessment tasks), coupled with lack of time, were cited as limitations. The lack of curriculum opportunities and the need to adhere to pre-prepared lesson plans were obstacles in a further third. Comments from individual students reveal an astonishing range of reasons used by schools to explain why they are failing to introduce the global dimension. These include:

- *The children are too young.*

- *The school has a mixture of nationalities already.*

- *We don't teach much about other cultures because the children don't know enough about their own.*

- *The parents don't want us to do it.*

- *It's not in the school ethos.*

- *Teachers don't know enough about the global dimension to teach it effectively.*

- *We don't want to.*

These responses are reminiscent of the findings reported by Jones (1999), who cites 34 ways in which schools rationalized their decision to avoid tackling racism. Jones organized his results into a 'typology of disappearance', commenting not only on the inventiveness of the avoidance strategies used to ignore matters of ethnicity but also on the spectre of 'silence' that appeared to haunt his data. It would seem that a similar array of avoidance strategies is now being applied to the teaching of the global dimension.

(8) *Do you have any other comments to make about the module?*

In both the questionnaire and the end-of-module essay, many students commented that pupils are very interested in learning about the wider world. These findings are borne out by a MORI poll conducted for the Development Education Association (DEA), which found that over three-quarters of 11- to 16-year-olds believe 'it is important that schools help pupils understand what people can do to make the world a better place' (DEA, 2008: 7). A further survey (DEA, 2009) reveals that 94 per cent of teachers think schools should help prepare children to deal with a fast-changing and globalized world. One criticism of the module, which the students voiced in both the questionnaire and the essays, is that while they themselves are convinced of the importance of the global dimension, they found little opportunity to teach about it in schools. However, many of them interpreted this in a positive light and argued that they had benefited from the latest thinking and could bring change and fresh ideas to schools where they would be working in the coming academic year.

Phase two findings – student experiences in their first year of teaching

In 2010–11, students who had now finished their courses and entered teaching were invited to contribute to a blog where they could share their experiences of teaching global education. Forty-five students (around 20 per cent of the cohort) asked to be involved, and 15 completed an online questionnaire that was circulated towards the end of their first term in school. Although the sample was relatively small, it covered a representative range of schools, catchments, and age ranges. Encouragingly, most of the students (12 out of 15) said they had found opportunities for the global dimension, mostly as part of broad topics such as book week, languages, castles, or current affairs/disasters. Generally, the global dimension was not linked to a

specific subject area and the main mode of delivery was either individual lessons or class topics. Assemblies, displays, and theme weeks were also mentioned. One enterprising student had capitalized on the help of a parent to set up a link with a school in St Petersburg.

Despite these successes, nearly half of the students said they had found it hard to introduce the global dimension as it wasn't in their current school topic plans. About a third complained that there simply wasn't enough time. Others mentioned additional problems such as the lack of resources, the ethos of the school, and their own lack of confidence in convincing colleagues about the validity of their approach. However, the fact that pupils obviously enjoyed global learning and responded to it positively was clearly a source of encouragement. One NQT (newly qualified teacher) reported, '*The children are really enjoying finding out about other places and cultures.*' '*They loved listening to music from across cultures*,' another declared. '*I would like to add*,' commented a third on a personal level, '*how successful the global dimension module was in broadening my mind*.'

A focus group for ex-students that was convened in March 2011 revealed similar findings. All of the NQTs in this group said they had found ways to introduce a global dimension. Once again the examples were not neatly located in subject areas but scattered across the curriculum in topics as varied as Chinese New Year, Eco-schools projects, a French breakfast, Fair Trade, modern languages, and links with schools overseas. Lack of time and the constraint of medium-term lesson plans were both cited as limiting factors. However, it was encouraging to note that some NQTs had been given the opportunity to contribute to future planning. One had successfully suggested making a link with the local DEC (development education centre). Another had alerted colleagues to the teaching resources on the Oxfam website, which they had explored at university. It was also clear that the PowerPoints that were developed by tutors for the module and made available to students electronically were proving valuable in the classroom, both as a way of supporting pupil learning and influencing colleagues by extending their knowledge.

Tutor focus group

The involvement of new staff in 2010–11 and 2011–12 provided an ideal opportunity to gain tutor perspectives on the effectiveness of the module. A focus group was established, consisting of five colleagues, four of whom had been teaching the module for the first time. A pre-prepared question schedule was used as a framework for a semi-structured conversation about the module. One of the first questions concerned the benefits of the module for students. The responses showed that tutors agreed that it was helping to promote deeper learning across a wide range of curriculum areas. '*It is taking them out of their comfort zone and widening their*

horizons,' one tutor declared. '*They have a broader perspective on the world and become more confident,*' said another. '*It raises questions about what education is all about,*' said a third.

Participating in teaching the module appeared to have changed tutors' perspectives. '*At the start,*' one tutor commented, '*I thought the module was aiming to promote teachers who would teach the global dimension. Now I think it's about the further development of a reflective practitioner.*' One of the other tutors declared, '*For me this module addresses a key issue in education – the development of our future society and our ability to live with each other.*' Another tutor corroborated this deeper vision with the following reflection, '*The module is trying to do something very noble and provides space for students to do what doesn't happen elsewhere in the undergraduate programme.*' These observations are significant, not least because one of the challenges in presenting the module successfully was to develop the skills and capacities of a dedicated tutor team. Progress was slow in the first two years and it was unfortunate that the two module leaders were both geography specialists as this suggested a narrow curriculum focus. The inclusion of tutors from art and RE, plus the addition of a colleague from the early years team, considerably broadened the module's appeal.

The conversations in the focus group also indicated increasing self-confidence and greater understanding of global issues. Participants declared that the lectures had '*added to their knowledge*', '*clarified issues*', and been '*greatly informative*'. They also said that being involved with the module had given them '*a wider range of teaching approaches*', '*raised questions in their minds*', and '*dealt with issues children are asking all the time*'. It would be simplistic, however, to think that teaching about global issues is just a matter of having sufficient knowledge and information. The tutors identified a range of tensions and challenges. Political issues and questions to do with bias were foremost in their minds. They cited a number of unresolved dilemmas including:

- How can we create space for students to express their own views in seminars even when they are divergent?

- In what sense is it possible for a tutor to be neutral?

- Are all viewpoints acceptable, or are there some that it is wrong to leave unchallenged?

Phase three – exploring negative responses

Perhaps the most important issue to emerge from the tutor focus group was a discussion about the number of students who were either failing to engage with the module or who appeared to have rejected it entirely. One tutor reported that a '*small*

but significant minority' of students in both her seminar groups were '*obviously uncomfortable with the course'.* Another remarked on student attitudes and declared '*the body language tells us that some students are not taking the module very seriously – perhaps because it's not about literacy and numeracy'.* Informal email exchanges between tutors amplified these concerns. One tutor declared that students in his group had raised questions about indoctrination and bias. Others concurred that some students were questioning the validity of the module when extra time could have been devoted to '*more important things'* such as assessment or core subjects. In a critical process of self-reflection, staff exchanged further ideas via email and suggestions were made as to how to find out more about what might lie behind this small core of negative remarks. It was felt to be important that everyone concerned should have a chance to voice their opinion, not least because of the principle of inclusion that underpinned the programme.

An immediate response was to organize a drop-in session where students could discuss their feelings and responses. Two slots were arranged in the middle of the teaching day at a time and place that were designed to be as convenient as possible. Although these sessions were advertised as a forum for students to air any grievances, only a small number of students attended and those that did were extremely positive in their responses. Indeed, they seemed unable to understand the objections and problems that had been raised by others and even questioned why disruptive students were not being dealt with more severely. This rather surprising feedback emphasizes the richness and complexity of student responses and the danger of making assumptions and generalizations about groups and cohorts.

A detailed analysis of negative responses in the questionnaires completed by students at the start and end of the module in 2011–12 sheds further light on barriers and inhibitors. The largest number of negative comments concerned the lack of guidance and timing of the end-of-module assignment, which was cited by 28 per cent of respondents (n=81). Others (19 per cent) complained that the module failed to include relevant teaching ideas. A similar percentage commented negatively on the division of the module into two blocks and suggested that it should be relocated in the second rather than the third year of the programme. Around 15 per cent said they found it boring and repetitive. The fact that the module was timetabled for the third year of the programme, and thus appeared almost as an afterthought, attracted some justified criticism. Other complaints concerned bias and the limited amount of knowledge in the syllabus. The idea that the module was irrelevant was also expressed. As one student put it, '*the module has a bad reputation because people view this as an unimportant subject and don't bother turning up.'*

Some of the complaints about organizational issues may represent displacement strategies that mask deeper anxieties. Learning about the problems and

challenges facing the world in the twenty-first century can be a confusing and very disturbing process. Colonial exploitation, inequalities, and widespread violence are acknowledged and deeply troubling features of historical encounters between Europeans and people from other continents. However, recognizing that the resources that we enjoy today as citizens of the global North are necessarily predicated on continuing suffering and injustice is even harder to accept. Taylor (in Andreotti *et al.*, 2010) describes the moment and space that result from such challenges as 'epistemic vertigo' and she argues that students need to be offered the critical and ethical tools that will help them to respond. She and her co-authors also recognize the risk of retrenchment and the possibility that rather than opening up alternative ways of knowing and learning, colonial understandings and hierarchical ways of thinking could be reinforced by doubt and uncertainty.

Another way of coping with overwhelming disturbance is to enter a state of denial. This is a well-documented psychological response to problems which are so complicated and profound that people find it difficult to imagine how they could ever be solved. Public scepticism about global warming is sometimes interpreted in this light. So too is the wider ecological crisis. On one level, denial is a passive state, but it can also draw strength from congruent values and beliefs. In these circumstances it can become a powerful negative force that undercuts more enlightened and inclusive perspectives.

There is a further psychological dimension. Deep learning – learning that changes the way we think about ourselves, others, and the world around us – involves abandoning old certainties in favour of new notions that are both untested and uncertain. This can be traumatic, and finding ways of holding and managing the resulting anxiety requires considerable skill on the part of the tutor as well as the trust and support of co-learners. Drawing on theories from psychoanalysis, Bainbridge and West acknowledge that the inner dialectic promoted by new learning can be deeply troubling. This leads them to conclude that the response of the learner to new ways of knowing can be 'confused', 'hostile', or simply 'conformist and lacking depth' (2012: 8). The skill with which the tutor negotiates these anxieties is an essential part of the craft of teaching.

There is also a cluster of questions relating to values and beliefs. Learning about the global dimension raises fundamental questions about justice, equity, and human rights. In some of the seminars, students asked questions such as: '*Do we really need to know this?*' or '*Shouldn't we be thinking about problems in our country before we start worrying about problems overseas?*' There were also those who argued that what they did individually wouldn't make any difference and that there have always been poor people in the world so why should we care. One student was particularly forthright. '*I know this sounds selfish,*' she declared, '*but I want the best*

for me and I'm always going to put myself first'. As well as reflecting instrumentalist and parochial views of teaching, such responses raise questions about inclusion and humanitarian values. They also match the characteristics of the 'certainty lens' proposed by Andreotti (2010). In this perspective, learners project their personal and culturally bound assumptions about reality as natural and universal. Andreotti sums up this reaction in the generalized statement: '*This is what I think. It comes from my experience and it works for me'* (2010: 15).
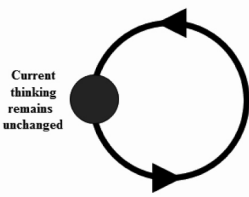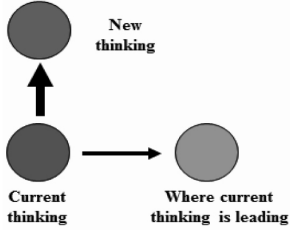
Further analysis

The discussion about positive and negative responses to global learning suggests that it may be possible to group students into categories (Table 2).

1) *Enthusiasts* At one end of the spectrum are the 'enthusiasts', who find the module corresponds with their interests and values and who embrace it without reservation. These students broaden and deepen their thinking through their engagement with the sessions and are particularly receptive to new ideas. However, their enthusiasm may also blind them to alternative viewpoints and lead them to overlook the assumptions that underpin their thinking.

2) *Deniers* At the other end of the spectrum are the 'deniers', who reject the values that underpin the module and question it at a fundamental level. Scepticism, when it is expressed through constructive criticism, is an essential part of academic thinking and a key tool for testing the validity of ideas. However, it can also be employed in more immature and unhelpful ways to buttress denial and rejection. In these circumstances it screens out new learning opportunities, as Sterling (2011) explains in his description of first-order learning.

3) *Floaters* Between these two extremes there is a much larger body of 'floaters' who embark on the module with not only an open mind but also a blank mind because they have never really thought about the issues involved. They are open to persuasion and may find themselves carried along by the 'enthusiasts', but they are also vulnerable to the entrenched opposition expressed by the 'deniers'. They are likely to be attracted by 'soft' approaches to global learning, holding out the possibility of deeper engagement at a later stage.

The challenge for educators is to deepen the thinking of students in all three groups and to channel discussions, which can quickly become polarized, into constructive debate. This then holds out the possibility of developing critical thinking, multiple perspectives, and flexible modes of thought that can embrace uncertainty. As Scheunpflug (2011) points out, recognizing that global education is about learning rather than about changing the world helps to shift the focus towards achievable

objectives. It also addresses the concerns raised by Charania (2011) that when students learn about global inequalities they naturally want to redress the balance but lack the opportunities to do something practical.

Table 2

Enthusiasts	Deniers	Floaters
These students are aware of global issues before they begin the module. What they learn chimes with their existing ideas. They will seize every opportunity to introduce global perspectives while at schools and are deeply committed to its values. Their enthusiasm is infectious but may blind them to alternative viewpoints and the assumptions that underpin their thinking, leading to moralizing and bias.	These students are sceptical or hostile to the module from the outset. Finding that the values which underpin global perspectives conflict with their own, they often resist new learning and try to opt out of the module at an early stage. A significant minority, they are unlikely to include global learning in their teaching.	The majority of students fall into this category. They are largely uninformed about global issues and surprised and interested to learn about them. The module helps to empower them and give them confidence. Their approach is largely pragmatic and they are not troubled at this stage in their thinking by the deeper questions raised by the module.

Students on the global learning module could be characterized as 'enthusiasts', 'floaters', or 'deniers'. (Diagrams after Sternberg, 2003)

Conclusion

It is important to be realistic about what can be achieved in a short module that is operating in a context dominated by other priorities at both a school and university level. At the same time, tuition fees and changing attitudes to learning may also be contributing to a more instrumental view of learning. Such factors could help to explain why many of the students who participated in the module failed to achieve deeper levels of learning. It is significant, for example, that in the feedback from surveys and the end-of-module evaluations, students rarely raised questions about the complexities and ambiguities of international relationships or the power structures that underpin them. Similarly, it often proved difficult to move the discussion in seminars much beyond everyday issues of classroom practice. These are the characteristics of the first stages of learning that both Andreotti (2010) and Sterling (2011) point out takes place within accepted boundaries, focuses on adaptation, and leaves basic values unquestioned and unchanged.

Recognizing barriers and inhibitors is central to developing a more nuanced and mature understanding of global learning. Course designers and module leaders may be tempted to assume that if they devise programmes which include global issues it will be enough to ensure student engagement. The learning theory and practice cited in this article suggest that this is not necessarily the case. Furthermore, there are a range of practical and logistical issues that serve to limit the effectiveness of global learning in ITE. Some of the key pedagogical and practical challenges are summarized below:

(a) There is a danger that stereotypes will harden rather than soften as students learn about global issues. Davies and Lam (2010) report that even overseas study visits are not always successful in dislodging ethnocentric stereotypes, and Taylor (2010: 13) expresses concerns that Western colonial understandings and hierarchies may be reasserted in response to uncertainties.

(b) Finding out about global issues can be both challenging and disturbing, and learners need sensitive support as they come to terms with new knowledge and understanding. Without it there is a danger that at least some students will defend themselves by resorting to denial strategies.

(c) Attitudinal change takes time and is liable to be uncertain. As Sheunpflug (2010) notes, influencing teachers' perspectives towards multiculturalism is a long and labour-intensive process.

(d) Global issues are complex and involve links and interconnections across both time and space. Many teachers do not feel qualified to deal with the complexity of global issues and are therefore reluctant to do so. Even assembling a team of committed educators within a large ITE department can be a challenge. Soft approaches may well offer a useful entry point to more critical engagement.

(e) Global issues have an uncertain place in the UK school curriculum and often have to be 'smuggled in' by committed enthusiasts. It is hard for teachers, especially trainees, to step too far from the norms and expectations of the system in which they are working.

(f) An individual module on the global dimension will be limited by the demands of the programme to which it belongs and restricted by timetabling. Furthermore, programmes are themselves restricted by wider social and cultural forces. This means that curriculum innovations are, as Sterling (2011) points out, often limited by factors beyond their influence.

(g) An enduring approach to global learning requires tutors to acknowledge the values and beliefs that underpin their practice. However, in order to avoid moralizing and indoctrination, they need to ensure that their enthusiasm

and passion for the issues they are teaching are balanced by the openness and criticality with which they approach them.

Despite these reservations, students who recognize that global issues matter are liable to include them in their teaching, and their knowledge and understanding will develop in the process. Students who have engaged with global learning are also likely to have a positive impact on practice across the schools in which they work. Initial teacher education can only ever be just that – an initial introduction to a lifelong journey. However, continued support for students, particularly in the first years of teaching, holds out the possibility of deepening and broadening their thinking. Negotiating barriers and obstacles is an inherent part of this process. Teacher educators who recognize these complexities will be better equipped to confront the challenges that lie ahead.

Acknowledgements

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