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## **Expecting the Exceptional: Pre-Service Professional Development in Global Citizenship Education**

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### **Abstract**

This case study analyses a professional development (PD) program in global citizenship education (GCE) that seeks to develop teacher education candidates' knowledge and capacities as global citizens during a one-year Bachelor of Education program. In particular, we explore how pre-service teachers perceived and experienced PD in GCE as a component of their professional learning and how this knowledge related to their understanding of curricula and pedagogical practices. First, we explore a model of effective PD and use this model to describe and analyze the GCE PD program, followed by a brief discussion of its context within the Faculty PD program; next, we outline the pre-service teachers' conceptions of PD in GCE; and finally, we suggest ways that PD for pre-service teachers can be enhanced to meet the specific curricular and pedagogical demands of GCE. Our findings suggest that best practices for PD in GCE include consistent use of pedagogies such as experiential learning and explicit modeling; targeted instruction in specific intellectual, affective, and action domains of GCE; providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to practice and reflect on the implementation of GCE in classroom settings; and developing collaborative networks of support.

**Keywords:** Case Study, Professional Development, Global Citizenship Education

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## Introduction

Eight months of combined study and practice in a pre-service teacher education program hardly seems to do justice to the complexities and demands of the teaching profession; in addition to mastering specific content knowledge, curricula and pedagogies, teachers hold a myriad of responsibilities related to the differentiated academic and social needs of their students. Perhaps more than ever before, today's teachers are expected to equip students with the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills required to succeed in an increasingly globalized society (Cuturara, 2009; Evans 2006; Mundy & Manion 2008; Smith, 2006; War Child Canada, 2006). Taking up this challenge, proponents of global citizenship education (GCE) seek to develop students' knowledge and capacities for actively participating as global citizens, with the end goal of creating a more just, peaceful, and democratic world (Blaney, 2002; Gallavan, 2008; Garratt & Piper, 2003; Hicks & Bord, 2001; Mundy & Manion, 2008; Trotta Tuomi, 2004). Our study and experience suggests, however, that many pre-service teachers and teacher educators see these demands as "beyond the curriculum"; but as Graham Pike (2000) notes, "what [global education] might conceivably contribute to the twenty-first century remains unknown, but the dangers of education without a global perspective are starkly evident in the history of the twentieth" (p. 219). Given the weight of responsibility placed on today's teachers, these issues warrant careful analysis to inform pre-service and in-service professional development for educators.

In this paper, we begin by outlining an extra-curricular professional development (PD) program in global citizenship education (GCE) for pre-service teachers at one Canadian Faculty of Education. Both authors are currently active in the program which was funded through the Global Classroom Initiative of the Canadian International and Development Agency (CIDA), one as a professor in the Faculty of Education, and one as a former graduate student. The second component of the paper looks briefly at PD as offered by the Faculty of Education for all pre-service teachers – this program generally includes Federation days, Ministry events, etc. Because pre-service teachers are presented with two models of PD (GCE program and Faculty), we were interested in understanding how students conceptualized the voluntary, extra-curricular PD offered in GCE within the formalized PD program provided by the Faculty. In particular, we wanted to explore how pre-service teachers perceived and experienced PD in GCE as a component of their professional learning and how this knowledge related to their understanding of PD and curriculum pedagogical practices. The purpose of the study is four fold; first, we explore the general principles of exemplary PD to propose a model for equipping pre-service teachers to integrate a global perspective into their curriculum and teaching practices; second, we describe and analyze the conceptual framework of the GCE PD program, followed by a brief discussion of the Faculty PD program; third, we outline the pre-service teachers' conceptions of PD in GCE; and finally, we suggest ways that PD for pre-service teachers can be enhanced to meet the specific curricular and pedagogical demands of GCE.

To better understand the implications of a GCE approach to pre-service teacher PD, we investigated two research questions: (1) How does the current extra-curricular PD program in GCE fit with existing models of effective PD? (2) Specifically, what are the curricular and pedagogical needs of an effective PD

program in GCE for pre-service teachers? Methods used in this case study include coding and analysis of themes found in document analysis, short-answer questionnaires, personal observation and focus group interviews (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

### Literature review

To locate this study within a theoretical framework, we begin with a description of Adey's (2004) evaluative model for effective PD, followed by a closer look at the nature of GCE. In his model for evaluating programs of PD, Adey (2004) outlines three key "input variables" and two key "output variables" to be considered in evaluating a PD program.

**Table 1: Adey's evaluative model for professional development programs**

Key input variables	Key output variables
1. The nature of the innovation being introduced	1. Changed pedagogical practice
2. The nature of the delivery system	2. Consequent beneficial changes in students
3. The nature of the environment into which it is being introduced	

The nature of the innovation being introduced (input variable 1) relates to the theory, evidence, resources and materials on which the professional program is based; in our study this variable relates to the program's curriculum and resources. The second input variable relates to the timing, length, and implementation practices (such as modeling, practicing, and coaching) of the program; in our study, this variable relates most closely to curriculum development and pedagogical practices. The final input variable deals with factors often beyond the control of those seeking to implement PD programs, namely the school culture and networks of collegial support; once again in our study, we have related this to the context of the Faculty of Education and its PD programs.

The key output variables are more difficult to observe, particularly in the context of a GCE PD program which serves pre-service teachers during a one year post-undergraduate Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). As pre-service teachers do not yet have their own classrooms in which to teach, these variables were studied by self-reports of pre-service teachers' intentions. This in itself embodies a great challenge in evaluating the effectiveness of any professional development program aimed at pre-service teachers (or teacher training itself): while changes in student outcomes are considered an important indicator of successful PD, and even of the sustainability of any change to be brought about through PD (Adey, 2004; Guskey, 2002; Piggot-Irvine, 2006), outcomes are difficult to observe when most pre-service teachers do not have their own classrooms for a significant length of time. Nevertheless, by drawing upon Linda Evans' (2009) definition of PD as "the process whereby people's professionalism and/or professionality may be considered to be enhanced" (p.295) we claim to be able to analyze the pre-service teachers' changed understanding of curricula and pedagogical practice (output variable 1) as a result of their PD.



While we have chosen Adey's model as a framework through which to discuss PD in GCE, we recognize that this model was originally intended for practicing teachers; in fact, we have found little research on pre-service PD or extra-curricular programs, finding instead studies focussed on subject disciplines, mentorship, and student diversity in teacher training programs. As we attempt to understand how a complex extra-curricular PD program in GCE might be better tailored to meet the needs of pre-service teachers and teacher educators, we have been led to question how the outcomes of such programs might be viewed as "successful."

Despite this limitation of Adey's model in evaluating PD for pre-service teachers' outcomes, the scope of this model is consistent with calls made by Edmunds (2007), Kubow and Fischer (2009), Merryfield (1993) and Robertson (2005) for analysis of the underlying theories of educational reforms (and of GCE in particular); recommendations regarding methods of implementation that complement rather than contradict the goals of PD programs (Bickmore, 1998; El-Sheikh Hassan, 2000; Davies, 2006; Freeman, 1993; Sutton and Hutton, 2001); and the importance of understanding the environment into which any educational reform or professional development model is being implemented (Bickmore, 1998, 2006; Bottery, 2006; Edmunds, 2007; Hicks and Bord, 2001; McCully, 2006; Schukar, 1993; Thompson, 2009; Warner, 1998). Therefore, based on these interpretations, we conclude that Adey's theoretical model serves well as a framework for analysing the extra-curricular PD programs for pre-service teachers and in GCE in particular.

### **What is global citizenship education?**

Although GCE has warranted criticisms of confusion by some scholars (Reimer & McLean, 2009; Davies, 2006; Evans, 2006; Merryfield, 1993), Mundy et al (2007) outline six common orientations across the formal definitions reviewed in a study of global education practitioners across Canada:

1. A view of the world as one system—and of human life as shaped by a history of global interdependence.
2. Commitment to the idea that there are basic human rights and that these include social and economic equality as well as basic freedoms.
3. Commitment to the notion of the value of cultural diversity and the importance of intercultural understanding and tolerance for differences of opinion.
4. A belief in the efficacy of individual action.
5. A commitment to child-centred or progressive pedagogy.
6. Environmental awareness and a commitment to planetary sustainability (p.9).

While this description is enticing, it also represents a formidable challenge for educators, new and experienced alike. As McCully (2006) rightly argues, "This profile is a daunting one. Frankly, it describes the exceptional teacher" (p. 62).

The challenge for any GCE program is to equip participants with the cognitive, affective, and existential dispositions necessary to process the "big ideas" of an unwritten CGE curriculum and its accompanying pedagogical practices. Furthermore, educators must be equipped to do so in various classroom, school, and

community settings which may or may not welcome such an approach, and within an education system that does not consistently recognize the importance of these issues or explicitly mandate their inclusion in the provincial curricula (Goldstein & Selby, 2000). Notably, with regards to the existing provincial curricula, an additional goal of many GCE educators is to challenge their students to critically analyse what is often referred to as the “hidden curriculum” of existing curricula, pedagogical practices, and classroom resources (Ukpokodu, 2003). Despite this somewhat “fringe status” and its inherent barriers, pre-service teachers continue to demonstrate enthusiasm for PD in GCE (McLean, Cook & Crowe, 2008).

### **Description of the program**

The extra-curricular GCE initiative analysed in this study is a multifaceted approach to the professional development of pre-service teachers in one Faculty of Education, “[stemming] from an increased commitment and expertise of the Faculty of Education to promote the knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators to work in an increasingly diverse and global community” (GCE program brochure).

At the time of this study, the team was composed of four professors from the Faculty of Education, a seconded teacher from a local school board, and a number of graduate students. The program’s mandate states that this initiative,

aims to integrate the themes of peace and justice, human rights, environmental sustainability and international development into educational curricula and practice, and thus instil a commitment to support Canada’s efforts abroad and at home among teachers and students (GCE program brochure).

The initiative is directed at pre-service teachers currently completing their B.Ed. in an intensive eight-month post-undergraduate program of course work and practica. The window for voluntary recruitment and influence is thus prescribed by the structure of the B.Ed. program which provides access to approximately 900 pre-service teachers at all divisional levels of teaching (primary, junior, intermediate, and senior) at a formative stage in their development as teachers. Pre-service teachers may choose to engage with the GCE PD activities once, several times, or throughout the year for all events. Given the voluntary and multiple offering of activities for B.Ed students to participate in the program, it was not possible to track the actual number of pre-service teachers who were involved in the program or the extent of their individual commitment. At the same time, the number of events offered to pre-service teachers allows for diverse research opportunities.

All students in the B.Ed program come with at least one undergraduate degree. The age range of this majority female population varies approximately from twenty-one to fifty-one, although most students are in their mid to late twenties. The majority of students are racialized “white” and able bodied, although the population of “visible minorities” has increased over the last few years. Some candidates are well versed in global development issues and are committed to them through previous experiences, others have little knowledge or sympathy, and many are somewhere in the middle of this continuum, knowing of and sympathizing with some components, but often

concluding that they have limited scope to incorporate this area into their own teaching.

The program has evolved over eight years as a series of extra-curricular events comprised of non-governmental organizational (NGO) sponsored workshops presented on weekends and during non-formal course times and in some classrooms. The objective of the program is to encourage pre-service teachers to introduce GCE into the formal curriculum and to acquire pedagogical skills that will enable them to do so. Over time, the program has expanded to include eight separate extra-curricular learning events and in-class workshops in a year. Two major conferences, which are organized with assistance from graduate and teacher education students; film festivals where films to be used in the teaching of GCE are viewed and critically assessed, and workshops using NGO-produced curriculum materials are presented and evaluated. Additionally, a website was developed as a means to communicate with all students in the pre-service program and students have enthusiastically posted their curriculum materials featuring global issues; a student-led research group investigates the theory and related practices of GCE during bi-monthly forums; and a resource fair offered teaching materials to pre-service teachers and Faculty. These varied initiatives give an indication of the breadth and depth of the program. A bounded case study approach was therefore selected to analyse in-depth this particular example of a GCE PD program with its specific constituency of pre-service teachers in a Faculty of Education (Yin, 2006).

### **Methodology**

Using Adey's model as an organizational framework, a qualitative analysis of the GCE program was undertaken to describe the nature of the GCE PD program being introduced, its delivery, and its greater context within the Faculty (Adey's input variables) and to explore how pre-service teachers perceived and experienced PD in GCE in terms of their understandings of PD and pedagogical practices (our adaptation of Adey's output variables). Our qualitative case study of one PD program in GCE involved the coding and analysis of emergent themes found in collected Faculty and GCE documents, evaluative surveys, and focus group transcripts, as described by Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) with the modification of using a "pattern matching" technique described by Yin (2006) for the identification and comparison of themes found in studies related to PD and GCE in Canada and internationally. This combination of emergent and existing themes was considered essential in that our research questions sought not only to describe the specific case of PD in GCE being studied, but to analyse it within the greater context of existing models of effective PD and GCE. As such, inductive methods were used to identify and analyse emergent themes; these themes were also compared to, and matched with, existing themes found in our literature review. This study did not, however, seek to test these existing themes, and therefore remains, an inductive qualitative case study.

To answer our first research question, we began by conducting a literature review on existing models of effective PD, looking in particular for studies dealing with pre-service teachers and/or GCE. We then conducted an inductive qualitative analysis to describe the current extra-curricular PD program of GCE being provided in terms of its content, delivery, and greater context (as per Adey's theoretical framework) and compared these themes to those found in our literature review. For

our second research question regarding the particular needs of an effective PD program in GCE for pre-service teachers, we considered the themes that emerged from our literature review along with those that emerged in participants' feedback and self-reports of changed understanding and pedagogical practice (our adaptation of Adey's output variables). These three data sources and our analytical processes are described in greater detail below.

**Table 2: Sources of data collection**

<b>Data Source Description</b>	<b>Quantities</b>
<i>Document Analysis</i>	
GCE PD program documents	4
Faculty of Education documents	8
<i>Evaluative Questionnaires (GCE PD activities)</i>	
Fall Institute	58
In-Class Workshops	133
Transition to Practice workshops	81
<i>Three Focus Groups (GCE PD participants)</i>	10 participants

First, to obtain an understanding of the two types of PD (those offered by the GCE program and those offered by the Faculty), we conducted a critical analysis on the GCE PD materials including brochures which were prepared and distributed to pre-service teachers advertising the GCE mandate and PD opportunities, and on documents published by the Faculty which relate to GCE specifically, and to PD generally, to serve as a larger context in which to situate the GCE PD program. We chose a selection of documents to represent the full range of public promotion of activities. Faculty documents included articles and descriptions relating to the Faculty's mandate, programs, and PD opportunities (as found on the Faculty website); the 2007-2008 B.Ed. Student Guide; and monthly newsletters distributed by the Faculty to pre-service teachers. Documents were analysed for both latent and manifest key words and concepts associated with PD, examples of events, and their descriptions.

The second and third sources of data come from pre-service teachers' self-reports and evaluations of various PD opportunities offered by GCE. One of these sources was short-answer evaluative questionnaires which focused on three themes: prior knowledge of global issues; integration of GCE into subject curriculum; and perceived barriers or obstacles to GCE pedagogies. Pre-service teachers were invited to fill out the questionnaires after taking part in the Fall Institute (two days of PD workshops and keynote sessions), classroom workshops, or workshops offered through the year-end Transition to Practice conference. Because attending the workshops and filling out the questionnaires was optional (a requirement of the Research and Ethics Board of the university), data analysis is limited to only those students who elected to return the completed (or partially completed) questionnaires. Therefore, the results are limited to the portion of the student body who attended the events and among those, only to those students who completed questionnaires. Our comments, therefore, cannot be considered representative of the entire student

population.

Three focus group interviews with open-ended questions were conducted throughout the year (each with different participants) for evaluative feedback. A total of 10 different students participated in the focus groups that were led by two graduate students. One graduate student is the author of the paper and the other student participated in peer debriefing. Responses from both sources were analysed for patterns in concepts, experiences, and priorities in PD for GCE as in the document analysis (Yin, 2006).

Since both authors are active in the initiative, our positions allow us an insider perspective on the program, specifically, and on the Faculty of Education more generally, with one author currently teaching pre-service and graduate students in the Faculty, and the other having recently studied as a pre-service teacher and graduate student in the Faculty. To ensure reliability in our study, we adopted a variety of sources and employed multiple methods of data collection (e.g. document analysis, questionnaires, focus groups, and personal observation) on which to perform our analysis.

As participant-researchers, we acknowledge our interests in this study, yet, because of our roles, we also are interested in a critical analysis of GCE PD what it suggests for the unique demands of GCE in developing curricula and pedagogical practices. Rather than an evaluation of the program, this research attempts to situate GCE PD within the theoretical underpinnings of global citizenship education, professional development, pre-service teaching and curriculum studies. To enhance the validity of our data analysis, we shared our findings with other participants in the GCE program as a “member check”, included some of their comments in the discussion, and compared our findings to studies by other researchers in the fields of teacher education, curriculum, PD, and GCE.

## **Findings**

Common themes arose from our three data sources that suggest consistency between the practices of the GCE PD program and recommendations made for effective PD by researchers of teacher education and GCE alike. Table 3 in Appendix A summarizes the main and sub-themes that emerged in our study as well as related case descriptions of PD activities offered in GCE. Insights into effective methods of curricular design and pedagogical practice for pre-service teacher PD in GCE have also emerged through this case study. To delineate these findings, we have organized them according to the two research questions framing this study and Adey’s evaluative model of PD.

### **1. How does the current extra-curricular PD program in GCE fit with existing models of effective PD?**

We begin our analysis of the GCE PD program by considering the first of Adey’s input variables for evaluating effective PD, the nature of the innovation being introduced, with a view to better understanding how PD in GCE is conceptualized and taught to pre-service teachers.

### *The nature of the innovation being introduced*

In the documents distributed by the GCE PD program, PD is associated with learning new knowledge, skills and attitudes – qualities that are not mentioned in the Faculty's PD program description. GCE's approach to professional learning reflects the conceptual framework of global education programs as proposed by Mundy et al. (2007), and acknowledges what Hicks & Bord (2001) describe as cognitive, affective, and active curriculum pedagogical components. As well, the content of PD opportunities in global education as described in GCE PD documents reflect common issues associated with global education (social justice, democracy, youth engagement, community involvement, citizenship, environmental and sustainability issues), and promote resources with a heavy emphasis on practical applications for bringing GCE into the classroom. There was only one instance in which PD offered in GCE was associated with accreditation and finding a job pre-service teachers were promised a certificate to bolster their professional portfolio upon completion of the activity. Notably, this reference to employment occurred during a single week of PD activities that were organized by the Faculty at large. During that week, one day was devoted to activities organized by GCE program members.

Pre-service teachers who completed the questionnaires or participated in focus groups consistently associated PD in GCE with goals of new knowledge, skills, and perspectives. When asked their reasons for attending the Fall Institute (Educating for Peace and Global Citizenship: Conversations, Pedagogy and Curriculum, September 2007), the most common responses were that they hoped to gain skills and strategies to put GCE into practice and that they were interested in the topics being presented, and small group also reported wanting an opportunity to network with like-minded people and be inspired. These themes were also found in comments such as these of focus group participants:

In terms of going to the workshops or classes, or any types of things, I usually go in with the hope that I will be able to get some new perspective on teaching global education – how to present it to students, what types of activities could be done, and hopefully to get a slightly different perspective on some issues that I don't know much about as well, that's always something I'm looking for (focus group 3, p.2).

I want perspective on global issues and I also hope to be inspired 'cause I don't think I could teach anything that I'm not passionate about. And also I want some practical things, some, okay, give me like an example of a lesson plan or some resources or something. Like, it's great to know about it, but I need to know how to implement it. It has to be realistic (focus group 3, p.2).

for me it's [GCE] always been part of who I am. But this year's been giving me more tools and a broader look at the different organizations out there (focus group 2, p. 4).

Intellectual, affective, and practical components consistent with the work of Hicks & Bord (2001) were all well-represented in these motives for attending the GCE PD activities.

Focus group participants identified useful features of GCE PD opportunities similar to those identified on the questionnaires that were completed by the students. In the focus group, resources were cited by the majority of participants as aids to integrating GCE in their future classrooms, including lesson plans, activities, books, and other materials. As these focus group participants shared,

I went to [the PD event] hoping to also get resources and new ideas and perspectives which I felt that I got that from the workshops that I attended. (focus group 1, p. 2).

My expectations were met and beyond. I wasn't really expecting anything concrete and I sort of got that, which I wasn't expecting. When I think of global perspectives in the environment and teaching and stuff, I find it really hard because it's such an abstract thought to be able to apply it in the classroom. And I kind of have some ways to do that now, like more ideas of how I can do it more on a daily basis instead of just integrating it into one of my units (focus group 1, p.3).

I personally would love some sort of a binder or, not necessarily lesson plans, but sort of something that brings together all these thoughts that are running around or resources... a section on resources, a section on concerns when teaching certain issues, things like that. (focus group 1, p. 10).

While the need for appropriate classroom materials and teacher resources to accompany PD programs is acknowledged in the research by Adey (2004) and Schukar (1993), the emphasis placed on such resources was significantly stronger among the pre-service teachers in our study than among beginning in-service teachers studied by Kosnick & Beck (2008) in their research on literacy instruction. This finding might be explained by the differences in experience, accumulated resources, curriculum pedagogy and confidence between beginning in-service and pre-service teachers.

Equally important, resources were consistently mentioned in the majority of responses to questions regarding why pre-service teachers attended PD opportunities offered by GCE. Pre-service teachers repeatedly requested resources specific to the grade, subject, and curricula of their intended, future classrooms. As one respondent put it, "Make it overly obvious for us how it can be applied to the curriculum. We are overwhelmed" (evaluative questionnaire). These requests reflect student concerns about integrating GCE into an already demanding curriculum and being unsure of how to apply their knowledge of GCE. Such concerns are also consistent with those of other educators grappling with the transference of theory into practice, particularly when teaching difficult or controversial knowledge (Macintyre Latta, 2005; McCully, 2006; Yamashita, 2006).

Closely linked to pre-service teachers' request from CGE coordinators for resources is the need for specific pedagogies that reflect the ideals and goals of global education. Pedagogies related to global education identified by Sutton and Hutton (2001) include cooperative learning, interdisciplinary themes, critical thinking, problem-solving, experiential learning, and community-based learning. Similarly,

Merryfield (1994) characterizes global education teaching methods as those that “bring about active learning and reflective practice, advocate and practice experiential learning” (p.7, 8); McCully (2006) notes the promotion of democratic values and practices in the classroom; and McLean, Cook & Crowe (2008) describe related pedagogies as “[striving] to be student-centred, interactive and productive of affective as well as knowledge goals” (p. 60). Given the range and demands of these progressive pedagogies, it is no wonder that McLean, Cook & Crowe (2008) discovered expressions of “surprise and distress [among pre-service teachers] at the sophistication required for an interactive pedagogy to be taught” (p.59).

Efforts to model such pedagogies were found in GCE PD opportunities, though they were not identified explicitly in workshop descriptions. Based on our findings, we concluded that specific curriculum pedagogies should be more overt as forms of knowledge and skills required by global education practitioners. We also observed how such pedagogies must be modelled continuously throughout the program so that pre-service teachers not only observe them in practice, but experience their effectiveness as they seek to develop new knowledge, skills, and attitudes for themselves. A discussion of such practices follows as we consider the nature of the GCE PD delivery system.

### *The nature of the delivery system*

Our analysis of the delivery system provides us with a glimpse of how pre-service teachers are being equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to incorporate GCE into their teaching. The vast majority of pre-service teachers who responded to the evaluative questionnaires and focus group questions expressed appreciation for PD opportunities that equipped them with related teaching strategies:

The teaching strategies that we’re being taught and being encouraged to use are much more diverse in the classroom so that children can work in small groups and do problem solving and varieties of ways to learn and learn amongst each other. So I really see the teacher as a facilitator of that mode of teaching...And I think with the global perspectives and some understanding of that through the peace and global education project or program, it might make creating that culture a little easier (focus group 1, p. 6).

[A presenter] gave a talk about genocide and bullying and that caught me completely by surprise. And that’s talking about as a way of teaching peace and also on a global scale; it was a moment, a real revelation for me (focus group 2, p. 4).

I think that I’ve always wanted to inspire students, I guess and create passion in them. But I think that I’ve realized that like I’ve been given the tools to do that a little bit more now and I definitely think that our role is to promote the awareness and also the “so what” question, for sure. And also just to kind of motivate them or mobilize them to actually do something. I think that’s a huge thing, like, whether that’s projects that we do, or you have to come up with something and then we’re going to act that as a class, like we’re going to do it (focus group 3, p. 7).



Overwhelmingly, this request was described by respondents to include the provision of resources and ideas for lessons or activities, with approximately half of respondents citing explicit curriculum connections as useful, as demonstrated in these comments:

I think I've been to a few workshops and I have paper resources and things that I can go back to look at which is great. And on the Internet there's tons and tons of ideas out there and I recently bought the Otesha book and that's amazing. The recent version has actual ideas for teachers with direct links to the curriculum so right there, when something's that accessible you really don't have a reason not to bring it in. So I think if there's more connections made with curriculum documents, people might actually see how they can, just making that link for them (focus group 1, p. 9).

I think for me, I've just been to so many over this past year, that I have so much information, so what I'm looking for is really how to use that information. Because a lot of them are giving out lesson plans and booklets and that sort of thing. So now I'd really like to hear how to integrate that into the lesson, into what you're doing (focus group 2, p. 3).

Being given opportunities to engage in hands-on, experiential learning themselves; to discuss, critique, question, practice and express themselves; and to see and hear the experiences of other teachers already involved in GCE were specifically identified as being relevant and motivating for pre-service teachers to participate in GCE PD opportunities. As such, the delivery system of GCE was found to be consistent with research by Davies (2006), Merryfield (1994, 2000), Sutton & Hutton (2001), and Warner (1998) in its efforts to provide pre-service teachers with opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning, though further development in these areas was called for by pre-service teachers as well, as suggested by this focus group participant:

I think a great thing you could do here is...have students in the program actually go implement something. 'Cause I think if I could see that this actually works by doing it, then I'll be a lot more motivated (focus group, p. 13).

We questioned focus group participants to identify specific pedagogies related to GCE; surprisingly, none of the respondents identified any particular pedagogies or teaching strategies as explicitly suited for this purpose. As one of the authors has had the opportunity to teach a number PD workshops and courses related to GCE, we are aware that certain pedagogies and teaching strategies are being taught, but the fact that pre-service teachers do not acknowledge this learning suggests that the current method of modelling as instruction needs to be made more explicit. Thus, while the intentions and efforts of members of GCE are to engage pre-service teachers in experiential learning of pedagogies related to GCE, these methods need to permeate the program in ways that they are recognizable to pre-service teachers.

Collaboration is recognized as essential in developing sustainable networks of support among teachers, administrators, educational policy-makers and community members alike. At the time of this study, collaboration for the GCE PD program generally consisted of coordinating workshops offered throughout the year with Faculty administration, professors, and students, as well as with governmental and non-governmental organizations. As well, during the year of our study, GCE launched an expanded website to serve as a forum for educators to discuss and share resources related to GCE. The fact that professors outside the GCE team invited representatives into their regular classrooms to present workshops also reflects some degree of collaboration within the Faculty. Collegiality among professors is particularly important for the kind of interdisciplinary teaching methods, ongoing mentoring and coaching, and creative partnerships between schools and communities as recommended by other researchers including Bickmore (1998); Edmunds (2007); El-Sheikh Hassan (2000); Freeman (1993); Gilliom (1993); Merryfield (1994); and Warner (1998).

### *The nature of the environment into which the initiative is being introduced*

The environment into which the GCE program is introduced can be considered in two ways: the first possibility is to take into account the environment of the B.Ed. program in which pre-service teachers are currently training; the second is to consider the environment as the future schools and classrooms in which pre-service teachers will be implementing their training. We begin by exploring the first of these possible environments as it is the one which GCE's members are actively involved.

The GCE initiative enjoys a significant amount of collaboration and visibility within the Faculty of Education; in addition to the Faculty's public statement of commitment to global issues on its website, the 2007-2008 Student Guide issued to B. Ed. students at the beginning of the year featured a complete description of GCE's PD opportunities. Invitations extended to professors on the GCE team to conduct workshops in other professors' courses are also indicative of the commitment of various Faculty members to peace and global issues and suggests a readiness to support further opportunities for PD in GCE. Ongoing efforts to foster such networks of collegial support are consistent with Adey's theoretical framework (2004).

Despite this apparent readiness among certain Faculty members and a stated Faculty-wide commitment to global issues, an important distinction emerged between the rhetoric of PD as found on the Faculty website and references to PD in the more personal documents issued to students by Faculty administration. In the documents analysed from the Faculty website, descriptions of PD consistently emphasized career development rather than developing professional knowledge, skills, or classroom practices. In these documents, PD was often related to certification, additional teaching qualifications, professional standards and responsibilities, and even job searching and job security. Identifying PD with professional associations and careers potentially sends a message to pre-service teachers that PD is about career advancement and specialisation, rather than representing PD as part of the personal and professional development of teachers as life-long learners.

Interestingly, when the Faculty documents took on a less official tone, as in the case of the 2007-2008 B.Ed. Student Guide and student newsletters, concepts of

PD also became more personal, with frequent references to the process of “becoming a teacher” and a forceful statement that “attendance at these [PD] sessions is required and essential if you are to be fully informed as a beginning teacher upon graduation” (Student Guide, p.18). Thus, there appear to be competing conceptualizations and priorities for PD within the Faculty literature which may have created ambiguity amongst students as to the meaning of PD.

While the B.Ed. program represents the immediate environment of pre-service teachers who contemplate using GCE curriculum pedagogies, their future classrooms and schools will be the environments in which they will actually apply their training. Eighty per cent of pre-service teachers who responded to the questionnaires identified significant barriers to effectively integrating GCE into their future classrooms (listed in Table 3). These obstacles included both personal and environmental factors. Anecdotal comments proffered by pre-service teachers suggest that some of the participants’ concerns were influenced by their vulnerable position as beginning teachers looking for employment in a competitive job market. As one focus group participant shared,

I think for me, my big concern is when we do, through the teacher induction program, when you first start you have your first five years with your mentor, I think that mentor, if they didn’t have the same global perspective and stuff, that would make a big difference because if they’re not going to support me, in what I’m doing in my classroom, then I might leave it. I mean, I want to keep a job, you know, ‘cause there’s not many out there (focus group 1, p.10).

Nonetheless, the foreseen barriers that are identified in our study are consistent with what others found in studies of pre-service and in-service teachers of GCE or related strategies and require further comment (Davies, 2006; Holden and Hicks, 2007; Author, 2008; Schukar, 1993; and Yamashita, 2006).

**Table 3: *Foreseen barriers to integrating global education reported by pre-service teachers who attended GCE events***

<b>Personal Factors</b>	<b>Environmental Factors</b>
Feelings of anxiety in dealing with sensitive or controversial issues	Lack of time in an already demanding curriculum; uncertainty as to how to make it fit in certain subjects and grades
Lack of pedagogical skill	Administrative or other staff members’ resistance
Lack of background knowledge	Dealing with cultural diversity or lack thereof in classroom, school, and community
Choosing issues or topics to focus on	Parental resistance
Avoiding “us vs. them” mentality in teaching about other cultures and countries	Student apathy or creating a sense of doom among students

***Changes in participants’ perspectives and pedagogical practices***

That the students in this study recognized their lack of competence with regard to teaching a curriculum of sensitive or potentially controversial issues, their lack of

pedagogical skill and background knowledge and their expression of the challenges that they faced in avoiding an “us vs. them” mentality in teaching about other cultures is evidence of Adey’s first output variable – changed pedagogical practice. In this instance, our research points to a change in pre-service teachers’ understanding of pedagogy and their feelings of (in)competency in executing these practices. Moreover, the pre-service teachers’ awareness of their inability to deal with a range of environmental factors such as cultural diversity, exhaustive demands of the curriculum, possible resistance by other staff members, and/or student apathy are indicative of their development as professionals to identify areas of future enhancement or what Thompson (2009) succinctly describes as “the ethical imperative to maintain competence in the expectations of your profession” (p. 169).

A further indication of the changed pedagogical practice among pre-service teachers who attended various PD opportunities in GCE was also evident among focus group participants’ descriptions of how their understanding of GCE had evolved over the course of the year through their various encounters with GCE activities and team members. One participant describes her journey thus:

[In] my view, coming to this global peace perspective, has been more of an evolution. Because when I first started in the program, back in September, I was so culture shocked by coming back to university and being in a city after being in a rural town... I wasn’t really aware of the issues and how important it would be as a teacher to be more aware of the global perspectives...So I did not attend the professional development conference in September and then over the course of the semester I became more aware of what the university has done in partnership with CIDA to sort of influence this program. And then this semester I have a professor who’s very involved in the project in the program. And so I’ve become much more aware of it and that’s what brought me to the retreat in February. I was hoping to gain a better understanding of the whole thing there...So I find myself now at the end of my B.Ed. program thinking “oh, why didn’t I go?” But I don’t think I knew enough about it in September or I just wasn’t in a place where I could accept it yet in terms of why I would use it and what would benefit me from it. Unlike the first two speakers who sort of thought it was a chance to gain the resources and the knowledge, I sort of had to come to it a little bit later (focus group 1, pp. 2-3).

This experience speaks to some important factors of both the nature of delivery and the nature of the environment of the PD program in GCE: the multiplicity of PD events over the course of the year was clearly beneficial for pre-service teachers such as the participant quoted above who came into the program with little prior knowledge or interest in GCE and who required more time to develop an understanding of, and interest in, GCE; likewise, by infusing GCE into compulsory courses through collaboration within the Faculty, a greater number of pre-service teachers were made aware of GCE and related PD activities. Finally, through collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations, participants were able to continue their development in GCE and were provided with real-life examples of how this approach was changing their own education as well as that of their future students.

Our analysis of the GCE PD program demonstrates a strong commitment on the part of the management committee to infuse curriculum with the goals, content, and practices informed by scholarly research in GCE and effective PD. This leads us to consider our second research question and suggest ways in which GCE programs could evolve to be consistent with the principles of effective PD for GCE and to address barriers foreseen by educators in this and other studies.

## **2. What are the particular curricular and pedagogical needs of an effective PD program in GCE for pre-service teachers?**

In considering the previous analysis of the GCE program in light of related research on effective PD and teacher training, and taking into account pre-service teachers' requests in evaluative questionnaires and focus groups, a number of recommendations emerge. Dealing first with the content of the PD opportunities offered, our findings suggest that PD in GCE should make explicit the definition of GCE and the distinctions among its intellectual, affective, and action components, recognizing that while they are interrelated, they also require specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes to deal with each domain effectively. As such, we will consider each domain separately.

### ***Intellectual content***

In terms of the intellectual domain, opportunities should be provided for pre-service teachers to develop background knowledge in a variety of global issues, historical developments, root causes, influences on people and the environment, and potential actions to avoid feelings of helplessness and doom. Unfamiliarity with the multiple dimensions of GCE is frequently cited by pre-service teachers as barriers to implementation (Bickmore, 1998; Davies, 2006; Holden and Hicks, 2007; Hicks and Bord, 2001; McCully, 2006; Author, 2008; Schukar, 1993). As one focus group participant asserted,

It was over the course of this program and understanding the make-up of the classrooms today made me realize that wow, I really need to learn about how to approach the issues of peace and global understanding and how to engage students coming from a variety of different backgrounds. You know, to sort of have a common goal. And they'll all have different perspectives, and they'll all have different backgrounds...so how can I bring all those together and then do something? And I feel very unequipped to do that. Very, very uncomfortable doing all that (focus group 1, p.3).

I think that the role of a teacher is very complicated. I didn't think that when I came into this program and then I was like wow, what have I got myself into? You bring in all your own biases plus what the school's asking you to do, and what you should be doing, and all of these expectations on the teacher, and trying not to bring in your biases and ... trying to help your students get more global perspective without saying something you shouldn't have... (focus group 1, p. 5).

As these comments suggest, and in keeping with findings of our own and others' research, pre-service teachers need not only to increase their understanding of development and global issues, but they must also enhance their understanding of specific curriculum pedagogies related to GCE and the theoretical research that informs these approaches in order to bring these issues into their classrooms.

### *Affective content*

Our research suggests that many pre-service teachers experience considerable anxiety and lack confidence in mastering the affective component of GCE. Dealing with complex, controversial issues is frequently avoided because teachers feel ill-equipped and uncomfortable doing so (Bickmore, 1998; Davies, 2006; Hicks and Bord, 2001; Macintyre Latta, 2005; McCully, 2006). Teachers also fear that such issues will scare or overwhelm children (or will outrage parents). These sentiments were echoed in many of our participants' responses, as seen in these two examples:

I never really was so aware of global issues going on until I came here and I had a roommate who was in international development and it sort of broadened my horizons a little bit and was kind of scary at the same time because it's not always nice things that you hear. And I think it's so easy to think of it as us and them...but that's one thing I've learned this year more is that it's not necessarily us and them, it's just more "us" because we're all here and the reality is that we're so intermixed and it is really has to be like a global effort. And it can't just be things like we're coming in to help you; we have the right way, or this and that. There has to be more of a balance. And I think that's really challenging, but if we can get that into the classroom and get kids thinking about it at a younger age then there will be less of a scare factor like it was for me (focus group 1, p. 4).

I've had a really big evolution of like thought about global issues. Just to talk quickly about peace. I think through my education, peace was just something that for me was just seen as okay, it's not war, world war, going on. And now, I find because I was taught that way, and because there's a world war going on, it's very scary to me 'cause I don't know enough about it. And I kind of feel that if I bring these issues up in the classroom I'm ill-prepared because I don't know enough about really what's going on (focus group 1, p.4).

Nevertheless, a survey in the United Kingdom reports that students demonstrated a strong desire to know more about global issues and saw them as being important to their futures (Holden and Hicks, 2007). Likewise, in a study by Yamashita (2006), students responded to their teachers' fears about dealing with controversial issues such as war by stating that they already knew about the war and they wanted to better understand it. In response to these demands, teachers should be encouraged to deal with issues related to the affective as well as the cognitive domains. To do so effectively, PD in GCE should aim to specifically address the discomfort and hesitancy expressed by teachers in dealing with a curriculum of potentially controversial and sensitive issues.

Dealing with sensitive issues in classrooms also highlights the importance of

paying attention to the selection of resources and materials used in any PD program so that teachers are aware of their own personal biases in choosing educational materials. Multiple perspectives and balanced viewpoints are critical in maintaining an open and critical dialogue among teachers and students within wide social contexts (Schukar, 1993).

### *Action content*

One of the six common orientations of GCE described by Mundy (2007, p. 9) is the “belief in the efficacy of individual action”; active citizenship is a significant part of planning among global educators who want their students to feel empowered – rather than paralysed – by knowledge of global issues. In our study, fears of student apathy or overwhelming students with a sense of despair and hopelessness were consistently reported by pre-service teachers in evaluative questionnaires and focus groups:

And that’s one of the main things that for me is a concern ... you hear about all these things going on, but you’re never really hearing about how you can make a difference. So you feel sort of helpless and your students are going to feel like that too if you’re just telling them “oh, this is wrong, this is wrong” but they want to know “oh, what can we do?” they want to make a difference (focus group 1, p.2).

I would like to, in a classroom, just make my students more aware and more comfortable with looking at issues, giving them more of a critical eye in a way and just really making it an active participation, like where they’re contributing to something and not just hearing horrible facts and feeling helpless. That would be like my biggest goal. And as I mentioned before, I’m not 100% sure how I’d do that, but I think it’s something that will come with time and experimentation (focus group 1, p. 9).

I’m looking for ways to take the topic without overwhelming, or becoming overwhelmed, or overwhelming others ‘cause that’s always the case when you tackle global issues. I remember feeling that way the first time I travelled to the..Third World... So maybe lessons or structural strategies that break down things into steps that one can do after the lesson (focus group 2, p. 3).

Likewise, educators in Yamashita’s study (2006) expressed concerns about alarming students. PD in GCE, therefore, needs to address these anxieties by teaching educators ways in which they and their students can get involved in projects. Efforts to do so exist in the GCE program through collaboration with local NGOs and governmental organizations, but pre-service teachers’ persistent fears suggest the necessity for further development of partnerships and experience in implementing GCE as part of an effective PD program.

### *Methods of delivery*

Related to its extended curriculum content encompassing cognitive, affective, and action components, GCE requires training in certain curriculum pedagogies that

support teachers and students in achieving their goals of social justice, peace, and sustainability. As Adey stated candidly:

Nothing is less convincing, or more ironic, than a formal lecture on the benefits of constructivist teaching as part of a professional development course...we are unlikely to encourage teachers to use active methods in their classroom by delivering to them a monologue and expecting them to take notes (2004, p. 162).

A common theme among studies on delivering PD is that teaching strategies be modelled and practiced by trainee teachers with ongoing coaching and support so that they can experience firsthand what El-Sheikh Hassan describes as a “feel of the new learning activities: what distinctive qualities they have and how they differ from other activities to which teachers are more familiar” (El-Sheikh Hassan, 2000, p.102; Cook and Duquette, 1999; Edmunds, 2007; McCully, 2006; Warner, 1998). Through lived experiences of being taught in the same way they are to teach, and to learn in the same way their students are to learn, teachers gain insight, experience, and commitment to new forms of curriculum pedagogy (Davies, 2006; El-Sheikh Hassan, 2000; Merryfield, 1994, 2000; Warner, 1998).

Closely related to the practices of modelling and experiential learning is that of reflection, widely cited by researchers for its importance in effective PD (Adey, 2004; Bottery, 2006; Cook and Duquette, 1999; Edmunds, 2007; Merryfield, 1994). To engage in meaningful reflection, however, pre-service teachers require experience integrating GCE in their teaching. Edmunds (2007) asserts,

The success of our students, and ultimately our teacher education programs, rests on the ability of our students to apply these theories to practice and consistently reflect on their use while adjusting curriculum and/or instruction based upon student needs (p.233).

Such skills require a significant time investment; as Gilliom notes, “change usually comes slowly and incrementally” (p.41). Nevertheless, acquiring this knowledge is essential for the effective implementation of GCE. These strategies require opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice implementing GCE with students; notably, none of the pre-service teachers in our study mentioned having done so.

Some opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice implementing GCE have been developed by GCE, such as planning and teaching a week-long mini-enrichment course for students in grades 8-10 offered at the University, or presenting workshops for GCE’s partners such as CHF (formerly the Canadian Hunger Foundation). Again, as we have seen, collaboration is key to the effective implementation and sustainability of such complex structures.

### ***Environmental considerations***

In addition to developing opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice implementing GCE, collaboration can also foster networks of collegial support, making school and community environments more receptive to GCE. If discussions of best practices and opportunities for practice in GCE are discussed among



educators, GCE may come to be seen less as a separate cause held by a specific subgroup of educators, and rather as a set of perspectives and practices for all educators and students. As one final thought, Gilliom (1993) has suggested that increasing the visibility of GCE programs may help foster increased administrative and collegial support among university and college faculties, leading to greater recognition of those involved. The importance of such recognition is also acknowledged by Warner (1998) who notes that “teachers need encouragement, incentive, and appreciation for risking new ways of doing things” (p.60), particularly when these “new ways” include challenging conventional methods and assumptions and engaging in complex, sophisticated content and pedagogies to effect change in school culture.

### **Conclusion**

This study has brought to light the possible ambiguities that exist between the opportunities offered for PD in GCE and those offered by the Faculty. First, multiple conceptions and representations of PD were identified within the Faculty, from intellectual and social development among educators to accreditation and certification for securing employment. Second, we discussed the tensions that existed between the need to prepare pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills to succeed in the education system as it currently exists and the desire to encourage critical thinking and change in curriculum pedagogies to reflect the goals of GCE (for example, integrating global perspectives into their curricula and regular teaching practices). Third, we identified competing agendas within pre-service teachers’ requests for specific resources, lesson ideas and curricular connections (all of which they felt were necessary to integrate GCE into their teaching), which contrasts with the desire of teacher educators in GCE to have pre-service teachers develop transferable skills and strategies to adapt to the curriculum, whatever the subject. Further consideration and collaboration among all Faculty members (including those involved in GCE) and clear communication between Faculty members and pre-service teachers will be critical in balancing these diverse interests so that all stakeholders can work together towards achieving their goals and developing best practices for doing so.

While attempts to have participants complete evaluative questionnaires have been successful, it remains difficult to assess the PD of participating pre-services teachers with widely varying backgrounds who attend varying PD opportunities offered by GCE. Focus groups have afforded us with individual accounts of participants’ development throughout the year but it has proven difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of participants for such groups, and these cases are not sufficient to generalize to others taking part in GCE, let alone those who choose not to participate. Efforts to engage pre-service teachers in research related to GCE and planning of future PD opportunities might serve as an inroad to developing interest and ownership in the program and could lead to increased participation in both PD and evaluation opportunities. Despite the difficulties in evaluating the causal effects of the GCE initiative, feedback has proven useful in providing insights into the needs and interests of pre-service teachers, and the persistence of common fears and anxieties related to teaching global citizenship curriculum pedagogies.

The challenges of any PD program are many; the challenges of PD in GCE are particularly formidable. Here is an innovation that requires not only a change in

knowledge, pedagogical practice, and attitude, but, possibly significant changes in all three, so that teachers will be motivated to teach from a global perspective. This “exceptional profile” as McCully (2006) describes it, aims not only to enhance a teacher’s knowledge or skill in any one particular area, but to redefine how they conceptualize education in general and to equip her/him with best practices for all areas of curriculum pedagogy. The consistent use of best pedagogical practices include: experiential learning and explicit modelling; targeted, specific instruction in each of the intellectual, affective, and action domains of GCE; availing pre-service teachers with opportunities to practice and reflect on the implementation of GCE in a classroom setting; and developing collaborative networks of support to address the nature of the innovation, delivery systems, and the environment into which the innovation is being introduced (Adey, 2004).

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## Appendix

**Table 3: Main and sub-themes of findings and related case descriptions**

Themes	Case Descriptions of PD in GCE
<p><i>Nature of the of the innovation being introduced</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PD in GCE associated with cognitive, affective, and active curriculum pedagogical components;</li> <li>• Content of PD opportunities in global education reflect common issues associated with global education;</li> <li>• Strong emphasis on classroom resources for GCE;</li> <li>• Strong emphasis on explicit instruction in complementary pedagogies for GCE.</li> </ul>	<p>Specific content of PD in GCE varied depending on the activity or workshop, but generally included background information on issues commonly associated with GCE (social justice, democracy, youth engagement, community involvement, citizenship, environmental and sustainability issues) which address both the cognitive and affective components of GCE, as well as modeling and provision of pedagogies, lesson ideas, and classroom resources which reflect the active component.</p>
<p><i>Nature of the delivery system</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling of complementary pedagogies for GCE;</li> <li>• Opportunities for experiential learning;</li> <li>• Opportunities for critical reflection and discussion;</li> <li>• Opportunities to learn from classroom teachers with experience in GCE;</li> <li>• Collaboration with Faculty and community members.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fall and Winter Institutes:</b> one- to two-day conferences which included a series of panel presentations, keynote speakers and workshops led by teachers, professors and non-governmental organization volunteers and employees. Participants selected from a variety of workshops that generally employ participatory learning, provide background information on specific issues or organizations, and often equip participants with classroom resources and/or lesson ideas.</p> <p><b>In-class workshops:</b> 60-80 minute workshops led by professors, non-governmental organizations such as CHF (formerly Canadian Hunger Foundation), UNICEF etc. These workshops provided important background information on specific issues and organizations, sample lessons and activities for bringing these issues into the classroom, and often facilitated the provisions of (or exposure to available) classroom resources; these workshops frequently involved participatory learning and modeling of classroom activities.</p> <p><b>Film viewings:</b> participants viewed films (documentaries, feature films, classroom video resources) related to issues common to GCE with lunch provided; discussions were then facilitated by GCE team members regarding participants' learning and impressions of the films and discussions regarding how these resources might be used in their teaching. Participants were also able to request or recommend future films to be viewed and discussed.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> a website was launched to provide a forum for pre-service teachers to discuss GCE, share resources and lesson plans; links to existing resources and organizations were added and pre-service teachers were encouraged to create and submit lesson and unit plans and resource reviews. Updates for upcoming GCE PD activities were also posted.</p>

	<p><b>Transition to Practice:</b> The GCE team took on the organization of a day of workshops (within a week of scheduled PD activities), for all B.Ed. students during the last week of classes. The team decided on an environmental sustainability theme. The day included keynote addresses by environmental advocates Lisa Glithero (founder of Project EYES) and a Member of Parliament and former teacher, Justin Trudeau, and offered workshops facilitated by NGOs, classroom teachers, and in-house and visiting university professors. While many of the workshops focused on themes of environmental sustainability, other topics related to GCE were also represented, such as civil liberties, social justice, and peace education. Two of the focus groups used in this study were conducted over lunch during the week of Transition to Practice PD activities.</p>
<p><i>Nature of the environment into which it is being introduced</i></p> <p><b>Current Faculty Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between Faculty and extra-curricular PD program in GCE;</li> <li>• Conflicting conceptions of PD within the Faculty.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future School Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreseen personal barriers to GCE*;</li> <li>• Foreseen environmental barriers to GCE*.</li> </ul>	<p>The B.Ed program in which this case study is situated is a full-time one-year post-undergraduate degree in the anglophone sector of one Canadian Faculty of Education. The program is divided into three divisions: primary/junior (kindergarten-grade 6), junior/intermediate (grades 4-10), and intermediate/senior (grades 7-12). The program has an enrolment of approximately 800 students, the majority of whom are racialized “white” and many are women in their mid-twenties.</p> <p>While the GCE PD program under study is extra-curricular, members of the GCE team also teach in the Faculty and as a result have opportunities to incorporate GCE into their teaching, as well as building bridges with other Faculty members to offer in-class workshops in other courses and to promote extra-curricular PD opportunities in GCE. The GCE team receives considerable support from the Faculty for publicity for PD activities and collaboration in the planning of conferences, workshops, and film viewings.</p> <p>The school environments in which pre-service teachers are conducting practica and looking for future employment vary greatly from school to school with regard to their openness to and experience with GCE. While themes common to GCE can be found in various provincial curriculum documents (most notably environmental sustainability), no explicit mandate exists for many of its components such as social justice and peace education. Given the substantial demands of the existing curricula, therefore, some see GCE as an “extra” that they may or may not have time to include in their teaching. Similarly, many progressive pedagogies used in GCE are currently in use in many classrooms across the country, however, these approaches vary with individual teachers and the resources available to them.</p>

<p><b><i>Changed pedagogical practice</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change in pre-service teachers' understanding of GCE and required pedagogy.</li></ul>	<p>Opportunities to develop instructional units in teacher education classes and to implement these units during pre-service teachers' practica; participating in film discussions regarding pedagogical practices and potential resources; organizing a university wide mini-enrichment week comprised of global education activities for 30 grade eight students; and creating and reviewing existing GCE resources for the website all serve to develop pre-service teachers' understanding of GCE and its required pedagogy by engaging them as creators, evaluators, and participants in learning.</p>
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## **Preparing student teachers to address complex learning and controversy with middle grades students**

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### **Abstract**

This qualitative study explores pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching critical literacy through discussions of controversial issues. Personality questionnaires were given to six classes of pre-student teachers over three semesters in order to gauge interest in teaching methods that incorporate inquiry learning and critical literacy. The results of this study suggest that these pre-service teachers were generally unwilling to discussing controversial issues in their classes. Also some teachers did not necessarily believe that students are capable of directing their own learning. The authors of this study make recommendations for preparing teachers to think about critical literacy through discussions of controversial issues.

**Keywords:** Critical literacy, Preservice teacher education, complex learning, controversy

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## Introduction

Middle school teachers begin each new school year confronted with the task of helping students with diverse backgrounds and abilities further their literacy skills and content knowledge. At the same time, teachers' concern over high stakes tests and in covering content, place limits on time and methods (Lipman,2004; McNeil,2000). In spite of these constraints, researchers have demonstrated that teachers value the teaching of critical literacy using a variety of methods and texts (Byford, Lennon & Russell, 2009). However, new teachers are frequently unclear about how to approach the teaching of critical literacy especially when topics are viewed by teachers and/or students as controversial in nature. Some teachers may avoid teaching controversial subjects even though they believe their students must learn to think and argue critically (Levitt & Longstreet, 2003). This is especially evident when new teachers reflect on the mechanics of leading discussions on controversial issues. Teachers may be unsure how to proceed during controversial discussions and other critical activities, and not all students will readily embrace critical literacy activities (Evans, 2002; Lalik & Oliver, 2007; Young, 2000).

Further, critical theorists and social studies researchers have suggested that curriculum and teaching methods reflect the political and community of the school. In some school districts, administrators and teachers are less influential than parents, students and local politics (Cornbleth, 2001). Cornbleth (2001) recommends research that looks beyond individual classrooms to analyze the cultural, school and political contexts that affect individual teachers. Teaching students to think about and discuss political and social issues can be beneficial if classroom conflict is managed constructively (Avery, 2004). New teachers may be hesitant to initiate classroom discussions, uncomfortable with a perceived lack of teacher control. If the teaching of critical and controversial issues seems problematic for classroom teachers, pre-service and student teachers also grapple with decisions about how—or if—to teach critical literacy skills, at least in terms of subjects that may be perceived as controversial by the students and/or community.

The purpose of this study was to determine pre-service teachers' goals and perceptions of teaching about teaching critical literacy through controversial issues.

These questions guided the research:

1. What are pre-service teachers' beliefs about discussions of critical issues?
2. What are pre-service beliefs about student-directed learning?

Our study examines pre-service teachers' understanding of their school cultures, and explores their reasons for choosing to avoid or include discussions of controversial issues. In teaching students to raise and pursue questions about the ideas one encounters, our pre-service teachers chose a path of least resistance, and some indicated that they would continue to choose this path, depending on the school climate of their future employment. Although we agree that new teachers must be considerate of their school climate, we were alarmed at the passivity and anxiety that our pre-service teachers demonstrated.

### **Theoretical Framework: Critical Theories**

We place our research analysis within critical theoretical frameworks, especially those that address class discussions and critical literacy practices. Empowering students to become effective readers and thinkers is a primary goal of critical literacy instruction, which engages students in analyzing and synthesizing texts and experiences (Pescatore, 2008). Critical literacy also involves teaching students to take a critical stance toward “official knowledge” (Finn, 1999; Kelly, 1997; Schor, 1992;). Social studies educators have argued recently that pre-service teachers must be taught to engage students in dialogue on politics and social issues and to not simply cover content (Avery, 2004; Whitson, 2004).

Meaning, for students, is created through discussion and analysis with the assistance of a knowledgeable teacher, and research suggests that active class discussions can improve understanding of content (Almasi, O’Flahavan, & Arya, 2001; Almasi et al., 2004; Hess, 2009). For teachers who want to encourage lifelong interest in social issues and critical literacy, open discussions about texts are important components of some classrooms, primarily in social studies and language arts (Allen, Moller & Stroup, 2003; Applebee et al, 2003; Byford, Lennon & Russell, 2009; Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995; Smith, 2006 ). However, state requirements, and other school factors, may affect teacher decision making about critical discussions and activities. Politics and values leak into classrooms and affect the teaching and learning of literacy, sometimes in unexpected ways (Apple, 2004; Cornbleth, 2001; Finn, 1999; Giroux, 2002; Kincheloe, 2004). Critical theory addresses the politics surrounding school, learning and teacher control.

Although critical theorists currently view schools and classrooms as products of politics and economics, Apple (2004) emphasized the potential for teachers and students to become agents of change. Some critical theorists recommend teaching students to improve the cultures and communities where they live and work (Delpit, 1995; Kincheloe, 2004; Lewis, 2000; Street, 1995). However, as a result of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), preservice teachers thoughts lean more toward “survival teaching”—covering state-mandated content so students will perform well on state tests (McNeil, 2000; Smith, 2006).

Social studies researchers Winston & Ross (2001) point out that recent social studies curricula reflect a growing conservatism. Winston and Ross write, “The paradox of social studies curriculum practice is that it is marked by both the appearance of diversity (e.g, the various ‘traditions’ or categories proposed for social studies curriculum and instruction) and the *appearance of uniformity* (eg, stable curricular scope and sequence entrenched patterns of instruction” (p. 51). In their view, the nature of some social studies curricula reflects our society’s emphasis on the memorization of content so students will produce high test scores. However, critics of our present test-obsessed culture also remind educators that students can learn content at the same time they are learning how to think, write and speak critically and analytically. Required and elective courses in public schools allow opportunities for a more democratic education through class discussions guided by teachers. Schools are places in which young people can be taught how to discuss critical and controversial issues (Hess, 2009).

Cornbleth (2001) extends Winston & Ross' (2001) analysis by suggesting that the focus of social studies education tends to reflect the school and community. Parental pressures indirectly or directly inform teachers' choices of how to teach social studies content. However, teaching social studies by "selective information transmission" demonstrates teachers' acceptance of social and scientific content and limits the possibilities of teaching students to think critically and to question texts, social conditions and politics (Cornbleth, 2001; Santora, 2001). In a study conducted by Wilson et al. (2002), social studies teachers were able to facilitate students' discussions on current controversial issues, unconcerned about parent and administrators' reactions. If the experienced classroom teachers in Wilson et al.'s (2002) study actively engaged students in controversial issues, perhaps their school climate was open to critical learning and discussion, and the teachers practiced effective methods for teaching students to critically discuss issues without unnecessary conflict.

Pre-service teachers in all content areas would benefit from further research that addresses the methods used by experienced teachers in addressing controversial issues and towards teaching students critical literacy skills. Our study attempted to determine what pre-service teachers believed about how they should teach controversial issues, and why some pre-service teachers, along with their mentors, chose to avoid teaching such issues.

### **Methods and Data Analysis**

The data collected was derived from undergraduate pre-service teachers' written responses to a questionnaire about their beliefs of teaching. These students were enrolled in the middle grades program at a university in the southeastern U.S. The questionnaire was handed out during Sean Lennon's (second author) middle grades education senior block classes, and students were told participation was optional and that the questions were designed to examine personality profiles of pre-service teachers for research purposes. To maintain anonymity, completed questionnaires were labeled with numbers, and students' names were not included. The questionnaire was given to three classes of students over three semesters from August, 2008 through December, 2009. The questionnaire consisted of four Likert Scale response questions plus a prompt asking students to write a paragraph responding to the four questions (see appendix A). Class discussions about the questions occurred during the block classes after the students returned from a month-long apprenticeship, and these class discussions were audiotaped.

### **Research setting**

The pre-service teachers in our study attend a state university in a predominantly rural area, and the public schools survive on Title I funds and a lower tax base in comparison to some of the more affluent public school districts farther north. In 2008, the city where we conducted our research had a consistent seventeen percent poverty rate (<http://ens.uda.gov>). The unemployment rate for this county and surrounding area is currently at 5.8% (<http://explorer.dol.state.ga.us>). This area also contains a high percentage (relative to the country as a whole) of fundamentalist Christian denominations, which lean toward literal interpretations of the Bible. Membership in Baptist churches, for example, was reported to be more than 50

percent for most counties in this area of the US (ASARB); however, not all Baptist churches interpret the Bible literally or define themselves as “fundamentalist.”

## **Participants**

The participants were undergraduate seniors enrolled in a middle grades teacher preparation program (N=167). During their senior year, pre-service teachers take a semester of block classes before a semester of supervised student teaching. This pre-student teaching semester also includes a four-week apprenticeship in a public school during which these teachers work with a mentor teacher and teach classes individually for a minimum of one week. The purpose of this apprenticeship is to prepare students for their student teaching semester, which usually occurs with the same mentor teacher in the semester following the apprenticeship. After four weeks the students return to senior block classes.

One hundred forty six students completed the questionnaires (see Appendix A). Applying what Corbin and Strauss (2008) refer to as “theoretical sampling,” we chose to focus the analysis on students’ responses to questions B and D because these questions refer more directly to critical literacy issues and responses to higher order thinking. For example, Question B states:

A class discussion is beginning to branch into a controversial area or subject and some students appear to be getting concerned and/or agitated. Which of the following best describes your thoughts? (1) Stop discussion immediately (2), Steer discussion away from subject (3), allow discussion to continue (4), Encourage discussion with limits (5), and fully encourage students to discuss. Explain your thoughts/feelings and the actions you would take in a short paragraph. This question asks students to think about how they plan to approach controversial issues during class discussions.

Question D is directed toward future teachers’ comfort or discomfort with student questions and knowledge:

Students are asking you complex and/or higher order questions in a field or subject you are not knowledgeable about. Which of the following best describes your reaction? (1) Ignore the students’ requests, (2) move away from the subject, (3) make little attempt at answering, (4) Try to find information, and (5) research to augment the discussion.

For this question, pre-service teachers not only acknowledged in writing how much authority they were willing to assign to those students who sought higher learning, but also how comfortable they were in encouraging students to move beyond state-mandated content.

We also discussed the pre-service teachers’ responses to questions B and D during class after each group had returned from their apprenticeships to resume their senior block classes. Sean (second author) led the class discussions. Discussions were audiotaped, and tapes were transcribed and coded. The purpose of these discussions was for the authors to further interpret the reasoning behind some of the pre-service teachers’ written responses. These pre-service teachers were asked to

provide examples from their apprenticeship teaching experiences during the class discussion; as a result, the class discussion was an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their classroom experiences. This also helped us as researchers to “clarify the participants’ ways of describing and interpreting” their beliefs about teaching (Stringer, 2008, p.49).

### **Data Analysis**

Three sets of data were analyzed using constant comparison analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). First, we examined the numbered responses on the questionnaires, calculating a percentage for each descriptor choice (one through five) for questions B and D (see appendix A). Next, we read the written paragraph responses and class discussion transcriptions and both authors participated in a process of individual, open coding. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During the process of open coding, both authors underlined words and phrases in the transcripts, then wrote *Invivo* code words, which were words and phrases spoken by the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Our next step included writing code words and phrases in the margins of written paragraphs and discussion transcripts to illustrate concepts, such as the idea of “teachers responsibility for student learning,” which is a concept that emerged during our analysis of question B responses and written paragraphs. After discussions about codes and concepts, we considered the research questions and agreed on three themes that we believe synthesize the data. These themes are explained and analyzed in the next section along with the results from the questionnaires.

### **Results**

The numbered responses on the questionnaire provided initial information in response to our research questions: 1. What are pre-service teachers’ beliefs about discussions of critical issues? 2. What are pre-service beliefs about student-directed learning? To examine the numerical data from the questionnaire, we first calculated the percentage of students who responded using each descriptor for both questions B and D (N=167). Tables 1 and 2 show the percentage of students who responded according to each descriptor number (one through five) for questions B and D.

**Table 1: Percentages for each numbered response on questionnaire**

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Question B A class discussion is beginning to branch into a controversial area or subject and some students appear to be getting concerned and/or agitated. Which of the following best describes your reaction or thoughts?

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**Percentages for each numbered response on questionnaire**

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Response

1	Stop discussion immediately	1%
2	Steer discussion away from subject	33%
3	Allow discussion to continue	12%
4	Encourage discussion with limits	50%
5	Fully encourage students to discuss	4%

Pre-service teachers responses to question B indicated that they avoided discussions of critical issues with their students, especially if these discussions were controversial in nature. For question B, fifty percent of the teachers responded with descriptor number 4, “encourage discussion with limits” and thirty-three percent of the students responded using number 2, “steer away from the discussion” (See Table 1). Less than 20% suggested continuing without restrictions or concerns. These results suggest that most pre-service teachers are generally uncomfortable with class discussions of controversial issues unless clear discussion rules or parameters are set ahead of time; these results are consistent with research on practicing teachers (Byford, Lennon & Russell, 2009; Levitt & Longstreet, 2003). Our pre-service teachers, perhaps like other pre-service teachers in U.S. universities, need strategies for leading discussions on controversial and critical issues; they also need opportunities to practice these strategies. However, the extent to which the surrounding community’s value systems affected the students’ reasons for choosing to avoid discussions of controversial subjects became clearer only during the class discussions.

**Table 2: Percentages for each numbered response on questionnaire**

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Question D      Students are asking you complex and/or higher order questions in a field or subject you are not knowledgeable about. Which of the following best describes your reaction or thoughts?

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**Percentages for each numbered response on questionnaire**

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Response		
1	Ignore the students' requests	0%
2	Move away from the subject	2%
3	Make little attempt at answering	7%
4	Try to find information	55%
5	Research to augment the discussion	36%

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For question D, which states, “Students are asking you complex and/or higher order questions in a field or subject you are not knowledgeable about. Which of the following best describes your reaction or thoughts?” fifty-five percent of the students surveyed answered using descriptor 4, “try to find information,” which suggests that these pre-service teachers believed they were responsible for conducting research to respond to their students’ interests beyond their content specialties (See table 2) This percentage could be read in several ways. Pre-service teachers could believe that all students should be encouraged to learn. Another interpretation of this percentage is that only the state and school-sanctioned texts are acceptable producers of knowledge, and even more alarming is that we suspect the teachers believed they must serve predominantly as interpreters for the state curriculum. Descriptor 5, “Research to augment the discussion” was marked by thirty-six percent of the students (See Table 1). Although descriptor 4 is stated similarly to descriptor 5, respondents interpreted these descriptors in a variety of ways, depending on who the pre-service teacher believed was responsible for knowledge construction.

In summary, the numbered responses created more questions than answers because we were unsure how the pre-service teachers interpreted the descriptors. We discovered ambiguities in respondents’ interpretations of the descriptor choices as we read students’ written paragraphs following the questions. As a result, we found it necessary to carefully read the written paragraphs that pre-service teachers wrote below each descriptor in order to compare and contrast these written explanations with the descriptor choices. Finally, our analysis of class discussion transcripts led us



to refine codes and concepts, then translate these concepts into themes during our final stage of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

### **Themes: Written paragraphs and class discussion transcripts**

The pre-service teachers' written paragraphs, and the themes that we wrote to incorporate in-vivo codes and numerical data were developed from a process of memo writing by the first author, and conversations about themes between the first and second authors. Table 2 contains a list of themes and the data coded to support these themes.

Our first theme, *Teachers are ultimately responsible for student learning*, emerged from a close analysis of Question B written paragraphs and class discussions. In the written responses, most pre-service teachers read descriptor four and five similarly, which was that they, as teachers, were responsible for responding to students' questions by conducting research themselves or asking the students to search for the answer. A couple of responders who chose number 5, "Research to augment the discussion," explained that they would turn this question into a learning opportunity by asking all of the students to conduct research and report back to the class as a class assignment. One student explained, "I could answer the question to the best of my ability, but if I didn't know the answer, then I would make it an educational experience for students by having them find the answer." This pre-service teacher's response, along with one other written response, suggested that at least two pre-service teachers believed their students would become more engaged in learning if they were provided with inquiry or research opportunities.

**Table 3: Themes and Data Sources**

Themes	Data Sources
Teachers are ultimately responsible for student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question B written paragraphs</li><li>• Class discussions</li></ul>
Class discussions about controversial subjects Should control learning experiences for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question D written paragraphs</li><li>• Class discussions</li></ul>
Teachers' personal beliefs and values should be kept out of the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class discussions</li></ul>

However, most pre-service teachers appeared to believe they were the ultimate providers of academic knowledge. Although a few pre-service teachers mentioned that they practiced inquiry learning with their mentor teachers, most responses implied that direct instruction was the primary method of teaching. During class discussions, students were asked about their responses to Question D, and if they agreed with our theme, that *teachers are ultimately responsible for student learning*.

Although there were some exceptions, most pre-service teachers indicated that they believed “the teacher” is most responsible for student learning. Pre-service teachers commented that mentor teachers expressed anxiety about ensuring that students were instructed primarily on content that was certain to be on the state exams. In many school districts in this state, teachers are reprimanded in a variety of ways if students do not perform well on state tests, so this may explain why pre-service teachers believed they must ensure that students learn the content. At the same time, pre-service teachers described methods beyond direct instruction that they used to teach students required content. Students actively participated in their own learning in some pre-service teachers classrooms, such as a group lab in which students discovered the science behind electricity using light bulbs, wires and battery. According to the pre-service teachers, although there were a variety of means to teach students content, the responsibility for learning rested on the teachers, simply because the teachers are accountable to the community and state for student learning.

Not all pre-service teachers believed that student learning should focus only on content state explicitly in the required curriculum. If a student raised a question, the pre-service teachers agreed that this was a “teachable moment” and one that encouraged both student and teacher to conduct research for a later class. In fact, two pre-service teachers described experiences in which student engagement took precedence over keeping on track with the curriculum. For example, one pre-service teacher described how her students became more engaged in learning because she encouraged students to raise questions or propose discussion topics. “My students knew so much about health care reform. After one class discussion, I did more of my own research on health care reform so I could guide class discussions better.” One pre-service teacher, Michael, gave an example of one of his students asking an historical question that he did not know the answer. Michael said, “I required everyone to do research, I did research, then we all had a great discussion the next day because of this student’s question.” There were only two pre-service teachers who provided examples in class discussion for which students became agents of their own learning, and one or two written responses that did not place responsibility for learning directly onto the teacher.

Pre-service teachers’ concern for the state vs. what they thought students should learn bothered us at first, because this suggests pre-service teachers already view themselves as lacking agency in public schools; and second, because these responses demonstrate that we, as teacher-educators, are not preparing our teachers to both work within curriculum parameters and teach students to become critical and creative thinkers. Although the nature of high stakes tests and high teacher unemployment in this state may contribute to many pre-service teachers’ anxieties about responsibilities to their students to make sure they learn content, teacher educators here and elsewhere must prepare pre-service teachers more effectively for teaching students to both learn content and think critically. Otherwise, if state tests continue to include questions that call for rote memorization of content and limited higher, analytical thinking, pre-service teachers will become public school teachers who continue to “present” content and discourage discussion and critical thinking strategies, focusing essentially on helping students memorize content for state tests (Lipman, 2004; McNeil, 2000).

Our second theme, *Class discussions about controversial subjects should control learning experiences for students* first emerged from the questionnaire and written paragraph data specifically from question D (see Table 2). Table 2 results, described earlier, suggest that the pre-service teachers were concerned that discussions of controversial issues would drift toward offensive language and/or content, and subvert teachers' educational purposes as discussions turned into attacks instead of intellectual debates. Written responses supported this theme, containing the words "feelings" or "anger." For example, one responder wrote, "Further discussion would upset and anger them more than anything." Another pre-service teacher wrote, "I would tell the students to consider the feelings of others." These comments suggested to us that these future teachers were concerned about their students' maturity for participation in controversial discussions. The notion that teachers must ultimately be in control of the classroom was also a concern for these pre-service teachers, who were beginning to practice strategies for classroom management with their mentor teachers.

Some responders who chose the number 4 descriptor, "discussions with limits," explained how they would "limit" the discussion for their students. Some interpreted this literally as "limiting" while other respondents seemed to read past the "limiting" idea by explaining why the discussion should continue and under what conditions. For example, one pre-service teacher wrote "When you discuss topics like these, it helps everyone establish how they feel about the topic when they know all the facts and rumors." Another responder offered advice on how to make the discussion more productive: "Calm the class down to a controlled level and get students to take turns speaking in a respectful way that will not offend any other students. Make the conversation into a learning experience not a shouting match." Although it was not clear what language should be used or how ground rules could be set up ahead of time for productive discussions, these written responses implied that some pre-service teachers view open conversation as valuable learning experiences. Analysis of classroom discussion transcripts provided further details concerning the reasons for respondents' discomfort with class discussions on controversial or critical subjects. Class discussions supported the written responses that these pre-service teachers were cautious, but not necessarily opposed to leading class discussions on controversial issues. During the audiotaped class discussions the week after students returned from their apprenticeships in the schools, some pre-service teachers mentioned that classroom management meant that one must at least create the appearance that the teacher is in control. One student explained it this way, "the principal at our school wants the teachers to discipline the class and not send the kids to the principal to be disciplined." Inability to control the class is viewed as a sign of teacher incompetence in most local public schools, according to these pre-service teachers.

Discussions concerning relationships among people of different races continues to be problematic in southern states (Carlson & Schramm-Pate, 2005; Lambeth & Smith, 2011). One African American pre-service teacher described a day during her apprenticeship when a school fight occurred between African American and Caucasian students. This pre-service teacher explained, "There are some race and class conflicts in the school. The students seem to be reacting to their parents' racist beliefs." Although this pre-service teacher was at first wary of discussing racial conflicts, she set boundaries for appropriate behavior, then encouraged students to

voice their opinions about the problems that were occurring. “I was afraid at first, but the students were polite in my class, and expressed their beliefs about why they thought some students were so angry.” During our class discussion, the pre-service teachers agreed that teachers students should be taught how to debate respectfully through a class discussion of rules and guidelines. According to Carlson & Schramm-Pate (2005), “Too often, teachers silence themselves and decide not to take risks, even when their fears are not well-founded” (p. 219). We suspect that pre-service teachers will only begin to take risks with their future students if they are supported by the school administration.

In our class discussion, some pre-service teachers generally agreed that they plan to avoid discussing critical or controversial issues until they know their students and school climate even though they themselves were not opposed to class discussions about controversial issues. One pre-service teacher said, “I wouldn’t want issues to be brought up and someone get extremely offended which would lead to me being fired.” Another pre-service teacher agreed, then added, “ Since I am in the social studies field. . . there are some issues, such as abortion, immigration, the first amendment, etc. that I will have to discuss. It is very important to teach the students about these concepts without taking sides. . . “ The one thing that our pre-service teachers generally agreed on was that the teacher must remain objective and not express personal opinions in class. This belief that one’s personal opinion should not be raised in public school class discussions seemed to be a form of self-protection. This underlying self-protection went beyond beginning teaching anxiety, and implied a concern for giving over the private self to expression in a public forum. We explore this more in the next section when we discuss our third theme (see table 3).

In summary, pre-service teachers may need to teach their students rules of debate or formal class discussion and practice formal and informal discussions early in the school year. Respondents did not comment on specific guidelines or rules they would set up. This suggests that our pre-service teachers require more guidance for how to direct and encourage whole class or small groups discussions in which students are taught to show respect and argue intelligently. Leading class discussions is difficult for most beginning teachers, so perhaps pre-service teachers may need examples of guidelines and strategies for teaching students how to debate and discuss effectively. Pre-service teachers may also need to plan how they will handle problems that emerge during classroom discussions.

We derived our final theme, *Teachers’ personal beliefs and values should be kept out of the classroom*, from the pre-service teachers’ comments during our class discussions about controversial issues. In Hess’ (2009) research, teachers demonstrated a variety of beliefs about whether or not they should disclose their political beliefs. For our pre-service teachers, however, the question of whether or not teachers should disclose personal beliefs was not discussed. The automatic assumption was that teachers should definitely refrain from disclosing their political beliefs, and teachers should definitely not disclose religious beliefs or values. Pre-service teachers expressed some anxiety specifically over religious issues. In fact, most pre-service teachers involved in the discussions suggested that they were uncomfortable with the political and religious environment of the schools, sometimes for reasons that surprised us as researchers. For example, some pre-service teachers are devout Christians, but understand that religion does not belong in public schools

because it violates the separation of church and state. This is interesting considering that many of the schools in the area allow—and even encourage—public prayer before school athletic games and meetings.

Two pre-service teachers explained that they were uncomfortable talking about religious beliefs, values and personal lives outside of class, so they avoided controversial subjects. One student, Erin, explained her views this way:

I am a very religious person. I have been told in the past that my religion may cause problems for me when I am teaching in a public school. I am not comfortable talking about my own beliefs in public or with my students, so I don't want to bring up any subject that is connected to religion.

Erin's anxiety about "getting into trouble" was shared by other pre-service teachers who suggested that they felt uncomfortable if students learned personal information about them. Religious beliefs in the southern part of Georgia lean predominantly toward fundamentalist Christianity and political beliefs lean toward conservative Republican. This culture of fundamentalist Christianity may create personal conflicts for teachers who are required, by the state of Georgia educational standards, to teach evolution as a "scientific, non-controversial theory" (NCSE); however, this study did not explore this issue in depth. Generally, pre-service teachers in our program seemed to believe that teachers' personal lives and beliefs must remain outside of the classroom. We question how this will play out for pre-service teachers as they develop their professional roles as public school teachers. For now, however, this separation of the private self from the public role of the school teachers seems to be a logical reaction because, at this point in these pre-service teachers' careers, they are constantly being evaluated and observed by mentor teachers who may or may not share their political and/or religious beliefs.

Another pre-service teacher, Michelle, was uncomfortable mentioning her own religious beliefs to her students. However, Michelle indicated that she was comfortable allowing the students to discuss their religious beliefs within the context of a science class. Michelle described her class discussion on the Big Bang theory:

One student kept on saying, "I don't believe in that. I don't believe in that." He explained about his belief in God and the other students talked about their beliefs. When they asked me what I personally believed about the Big Bang Theory, I told them, "I believe that we have a lot of scientific theories and these theories change over time."

Michelle avoided the science vs. creationism issue by focusing the class discussion on scientific theories, which was the purpose of her instruction on that day. This scientific focus allowed the students to share religious beliefs, and analyze scientific theories and the changing nature of science. Michelle also taught students that scientific theories are clearly defined and supported with published research. The other pre-service teachers commented positively to Michelle's reply to the students' questions. Michelle's class discussion demonstrated to the pre-service teachers that it was possible to encourage students to express their personal opinions; at the same time, teachers can redirect class discussions so that they are meaningful and relevant to the class content.

## Conclusion

As state standards change, pre-service and experienced teachers' beliefs may change about what and how to teach. We have yet to follow up on these pre-service teachers as they move from student teaching into the public arena of paid teaching positions. Time for class discussion on pre-service teachers' written responses was limited, and our results may or may not change if we implemented more time for class discussion or individual interviews.

In the end, our study indicated that pre-service teachers perceived class discussions about controversial issues as necessary for students' intellectual growth, but problematic at this point in their careers. If class discussions are to be effective, pre-service teachers believed students should be guided by clear parameters or rules for intellectually healthy debates. Our results are generally consistent with other recent scholarship on teachers' opinions of teaching controversial issues in which there was an underlying fear of displeasing students, parents and administrators (Byford, Lennon & Russell, 2009; Rogers, Mosley & Kramer, 2009). However, our research went further to explore the reasons why pre-service teachers avoided or did not avoid discussing controversial issues with their students. We suspect that the cultural environments of local schools contribute to our pre-service teachers beliefs about controversial and critical classroom discussions.

As our study results illustrated, there may be a connection between what pre-service teachers believe about their responsibility for student learning and their willingness to initiate class discussions. If teachers believe they are the main source for student learning, then allowing discussions about controversial discussions may put teachers in the position of accidentally leading students to think "the wrong way" or develop values or beliefs contradictory to the dominant local cultural and religious norms. Pre-service teachers priorities mirrored their mentor teachers, which was to ensure that all students learn the content so they will perform well on the state tests.

This preliminary study of written responses opens up questions of how to best prepare pre-service teachers for addressing controversial issues and class discussions. Although some of these pre-service teachers acknowledged the importance of questioning, discussing and searching for individual truths, few articulated what this should look like. Further questioning of these and other pre-service teachers is needed to determine their specific concerns about allowing students more control over their learning through questioning texts, inquiry, and service learning. Also, pre-service teachers need opportunities to learn about how effective teachers both "cover" the state standards and teach students how to think, read and write critically (Lipman, 2004).

Perhaps further research is needed with experienced teachers as they reflect on their thinking and planning processes when preparing to teach critical thinking. Moving beyond required state mandates may be interpreted as risky for early career teachers; however, teacher-educators must accept the responsibility for preparing pre-service teachers to help students think beyond content knowledge to a critical questioning of texts through critical thinking and multiple literacies. Eventually, No Child Left Behind, with its emphasis on state mandated curriculum and standardized tests, may be replaced by national standards. States will possibly face a different set

of challenges as new criteria for student learning and teacher evaluation are established.

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## Appendix

### Scenario Questions

- A. A student yells profanities at you, insulting you in front of a class of fellow students. Which of the following best describes how you would feel?

Extremely Angry	Angry	Not care	Try to be understanding	Empathetic to the student
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Explain your thoughts/feelings and the actions you would take in a short paragraph:

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- B. A class discussion is beginning to branch into a controversial area or subject and some students appear to be getting concerned and/or agitated. Which of the following best describes your reaction or thoughts?

Stop discussion immediately	Steer discussion away from subject	Allow discussion to continue	Encourage discussion with limits	Fully encourage students to discuss
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Explain your thoughts/feelings and the actions you would take in a short paragraph:

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- C. Your principal is asking for volunteers to create a new curriculum and program to be developed. The work is to be done on your own time and with no resources. Which of the following best describes your reaction or thoughts?

Not interested	Probably wouldn't do it	Would do it only if forced	Probably would do it	Immediately volunteer
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Explain your thoughts/feelings and the actions you would take in a short paragraph:

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D. Students are asking you complex and/or higher order questions in a field or subject you are not knowledgeable about. Which of the following best describes your reaction or thoughts?

Ignore the students' requests	Move away from the subject	Make little attempt at answering	Try to find information	Research to augment the discussion
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Explain your thoughts/feelings and the actions you would take in a short paragraph:

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## Miscellany

### Scope of the IJPE

International Journal of Progressive Education (IJPE) (ISSN 1554-5210) is a peer reviewed interactive electronic journal sponsored by the International Association of Educators and in part by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IJPE is a core partner of the Community Informatics Initiative and a major user/developer of the Community Inquiry Laboratories. IJPE takes an interdisciplinary approach to its general aim of promoting an open and continuing dialogue about the current educational issues and future conceptions of educational theory and practice in an international context. In order to achieve that aim, IJPE seeks to publish thoughtful articles that present empirical research, theoretical statements, and philosophical arguments on the issues of educational theory, policy, and practice. IJPE is published three times a year in four different languages; Chinese, Turkish, Spanish and English.

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