

Article

# Global Citizenship and Analysis of Social Facts: Results of a Study with Pre-Service Teachers

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**Abstract:** This article outlines how the dimensions of global citizenship education (GCE) are reflected in future secondary school teachers' analysis of news items. The question that guided the research was: When analysing a news item with global implications, do teachers in training use the dimensions of the critical global citizenship education model and which critical literacy achieve? The study used a mixed methodology. Content analysis was used to analyse the information, specifically the use of codes through descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings show that the majority of future secondary school teachers tend to take a socially committed perspective, while they take a critical stance or mobilise for social justice action to a lesser extent.

**Keywords:** social studies; controversial issues; critical perspective; teacher education; globalization

## 1. Introduction

In today's world, people tend to understand that local and global social facts and problems are increasingly interrelated. This is a reflection of the economic, political and cultural globalisation that the world has experienced in the past three decades (Pak 2013; Pak and Lee 2013; Stromquist and Monkman 2014). Globalisation has been magnified by the presence of information technologies, especially the Internet, which, according to Castells (2005), has contributed to shaping an increasingly interconnected world, where the media bear a direct influence on the way society and citizenship are understood (Santisteban and González-Valencia 2013).

The globalisation process can be explained by different theories. The framework review devised by Sklair (1999), Spring (2004) and Torres (2015) presents four main approaches to help us understand globalisation. They are neoliberalism, global culture, global systems and post-colonialist interpretations. In turn, Shultz (2007) cites three: The neoliberal approach, the radical approach and the transformative approach. These approaches show that taking a stance on globalisation opens up considerations when researching and developing educational proposals on global citizenship (Stromquist 2009).

Globalisation in all its dimensions has led to a reconsideration of the concepts of citizen and citizenship under the scheme of the nation-state. The theoretical frameworks developed by Arthur et al. (2008), Delanty (1997), Faulks (2000), Isin and Turner (2002), Janoski and Gran (2002), Kymlicka and Norman (1994), Tully (2014), Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) and Gun Chung and Park (2016) reveal that citizenship goes beyond legal recognition; after all, holding an official document that certifies a person is a "citizen" does not mean that this person exercises the duties and rights associated with citizenship. Instead, citizenship transcends legal recognition and should be placed within the sphere of the quest for moral imperatives that mobilise people to seek a better life for the community; a "citizen is one who participates directly in public deliberations and decisions" (Barber 1984, in Cortina 2003, p. 43)

and who tries “to construct a good polis, seeking the common good in their political participation” (Cortina 2003, p. 48), which nowadays is between the local and global scale.

According to Broomley (2009), Delanty (1997) and Rauner (1999), citizenship can be understood in the frame of relation to national and post-national, such as supranational, international, global and virtual, planetary, global or global-local (glocal) entities (Broomley 2009). The blurring of borders and the establishment of supranational governing bodies (OECD, European Union, NAFTA, Pacific alliance, Mercosur, etc.) which bear an increasing influence on the lives of people, societies and states have played a key role in the reconfiguration of the concept of citizenship. One definition that serves as a general framework for understanding global citizenship was proposed by UNESCO (2018), which suggests that it refers to the sense of belonging to a larger community and a shared humanity where there is political, economic, social and cultural interdependence in connection with the local, national and global levels.

The progress of globalisation in the past three decades has also shown its less positive side, partly due to the excessive centrality of the economic dimension at the expense of the political dimension, which has generated situations like an increase in poverty, inequality and pollution in the world. This has its correlate, that may be positive, in the emergence and growth of international organisations which work on these matters, such as Save the Children, Oxfam Intermón, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Transparency International and Greenpeace, which can be viewed as ways in which global citizenship materialises, opening new possibilities and scenarios of action for citizens on a global scale, and reflect the link between citizenship and globalizations below global citizenship. In the opinion of Tully (2014, p. 4), when trying to connect citizenship and globalisation, “we are already thrown into this remarkably complex inherited field of contested languages, activities, institutions, processes and the environs in which they take place. This conjoint field is the problematization of global citizenship: the way that formerly disparate activities, institutions and processes have been gathered together under the rubric of ‘global citizenship’, become the site of contestation in practice and formulated as a problem in research, policy and theory, and to which diverse solutions are presented and debated”.

Even though the notion of citizenship is associated with the nation-state, “new forms of citizenship are growing in the face of globalisation. This means that new forms of education need to be developed. It is unlikely that new forms of education will be achieved by attempting to bolt very different formulations together” (Davies et al. 2005, p. 83). Education, and specifically teaching the social sciences, should contribute explicitly to achieving and developing this (Goren and Yemini 2017a), because globalization’s effects, the social, cultural, political and economic changes, “hold special significance in educational settings, where preparing students for a global world has come to play an important role in citizenship education” (Szelényi and Rhoads 2007, p. 25). They are forcing schools and teachers to take an increasingly active role. This aligns with the fact that the quality of education means that students develop “the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through sustainable development education and global citizenship education, as well as human rights education” (UNESCO 2018, p. 1).

The literature review revealed that there are studies which inquire into the discourses on global citizenship education in future teachers (Yemini 2017; Yemini et al. 2019; Kim 2019), the purposes of teaching it (Bruce et al. 2019), the efficacy of teacher training programmes on global citizenship (Kopish 2016; Yang et al. 2017), the assessment of teaching proposals or methodologies (O’Meara et al. 2018), the influence of global education on viewing oneself as a global citizen (Larsen and Searle 2017) and specifically in working teachers (Goren and Yemini 2016; Goren et al. 2019; Çolak et al. 2019; Leduc 2013). They all concur on the importance of including global citizenship education in teacher training programmes in different ways.

The study by Kim (2019) shows that there is little room for teaching and discussing global citizenship education and his teaching in teacher training programmes. This kind of approach

motivated the study by [Tarozzi and Mallon \(2019\)](#) on how teacher training programmes in universities in four countries (Austria, Ireland, Italy and the Czech Republic) address GCE. This study found that the ways global citizenship education is understood and taught reflect the cultural and political contexts of each country, and that they take shape in three typologies: Content-centred, values-centred and competence-centred.

In this regard, global citizenship education is viewed as a way people can gain a broader and better understanding of the interrelationship between citizenship, politics, democracy and the globalisation process, which leads them to understand the political, economic, cultural, social and environmental implications ([O'Meara et al. 2018](#); [Bruce et al. 2019](#)). From these theoretical frames, we proposed a research question: When analysing a news item with global implications, do teachers in training use the dimensions of the critical global citizenship education model and which critical literacy achieve?

This project is based on the assumption that future teachers forge connections between theoretical notions and the analysis of practical cases which entails connecting the local and global scales. In this perspective, it identifies with what [Tarozzi and Inguaggiato \(2018\)](#), [Goren and Yemini \(2017b\)](#) and [UNESCO \(2015\)](#) suggest when they state that teacher training plays a critical role in implementing GCE: "Teachers and educators recognise the importance of GCE; however, they often feel trapped between curricular goals encouraging its incorporation in the classroom and cultural norms of nationalism or lack of practical resources that hinder their ability to actually teach it" ([Goren and Yemini 2017b](#), p. 179).

## 2. Global Citizenship Education

In the past 15 years, much has been written on global citizenship education ([Davies et al. 2005](#); [Szelényi and Rhoads 2007](#); [Oxley and Morris 2013](#); [Dill 2013](#); [Goren et al. 2019](#); [Sant and González-Valencia 2018](#); [Reysen and Katzarska-Miller 2013](#); [Rapoport 2009](#); [Gun Chung and Park 2016](#); [Sant 2018](#)). After reviewing several proposed definitions of GCE, we can note that the combination of the concepts of "globalisation" and "citizenship" in the "global citizenship" construct merges the meanings of each term and generates new questions on "global citizenship" that emerge with even greater complexity, from combinations that are reflected in theoretical proposals and social significance ([Tully 2014](#)).

The UNESCO institution defines GCE as, "essentially, GCED addresses three core conceptual dimensions of learning: for education to be transformative, knowledge (cognitive domain) must touch the heart (socio-emotional domain) and turn into action to bring about positive change (behavioural domain). This framework emphasizes an education that fulfils individual and national aspirations and thus ensures the well-being of all humanity and the global community at large" ([UNESCO 2018](#), p. 2).

The definition put forth by UNESCO, an institution which is part of the web of global governance, stresses the aspects more closely related to the psychology of learning, while covering the political and critical dimension or post-colonialist discourses to a lesser extent ([Andreotti 2006](#)). One approach more closely associated with a critical dimension of global citizenship education is by [Reysen and Katzarska-Miller \(2013, p. 858\)](#), who understand as "awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act. Prior theory and research suggest that being aware of one's connection with others in the world (global awareness) and embedded in settings that value global citizenship (normative environment) lead to greater identification with global citizens (i.e., prosocial values and behaviors)".

This definition of GCE puts aspects like social justice, diversity and awareness, which are essential in a critical approach, at the core. In the midst of the proliferation of definitions of GC and GCE, [Pak \(2013\)](#), [Dill \(2013\)](#) and [Stromquist \(2009\)](#) suggest that, even though there is no consensus, it is essential to develop greater global awareness. Following the ideas of [Dill \(2013, p. 50\)](#): "The global consciousness element of global citizenship ... creates lofty moral expectations: it consists of an awareness of other perspectives, a single humanity as the primary level of community, and a moral conscience to act for the good of the world. The global citizen in this discourse is a moral ideal, a vision

of a person who thinks and acts about the world in specific ways: as a universal community without boundaries whose members care for each other and the planet”.

In the review of the frameworks of global citizenship (Oxley and Morris 2013; Stromquist 2009), the notion emerges that global citizenship can be classified as to whether it represents civil, civic or political notions of citizenship. Stromquist (2009) identifies three main approaches: Social, political and economic. In the opinion of Oxley and Morris (2013), there are social, political, economic, cultural, environmental and moral perspectives. These interpretations come from the theory of world culture, social and critical citizenship and global systems framed in post-colonialist theories of globalisation (Andreotti 2006). From this vantage point, UNESCO’s definitions ignore these aspects or relegate them to the background, and Tawil (2013, p. 5) suggests that they can be classified as a soft approach: “In ‘softer’ approaches, the starting point for global dimensions of citizenship education is of a more moral variety based on the notion of a common humanity and a global or world ethic. In more ‘critical’ approaches, the ethical starting point is the concept of social justice as farmed by the international normative instruments of human rights”.

This research took Oxley and Morris’s definition of GCE, which posits “the normative and empirically grounded conceptions of GC in terms of their ideological underpinnings” (2013, p. 305). Therefore, we understand that “critical conceptions of GC tend to promote a form of ‘counter-hegemony’, emphasising the deconstruction of oppressive global structures, and are also connected to what Dei (2008, p. 479) describes as ‘a politics of social transformation’” (Oxley and Morris 2013, p. 313). Global citizenship will be possible inasmuch as people can identify and question the ideological dimension of events and stories on a local and global scale (Tosar and Santisteban 2016) with local repercussions, such as the rise of nationalism or populism. This way of citizen’s training in understanding should entail grasping that there are individuals and human groups with diverse ways of thinking, ideologies and interests, whose imperative is to reach agreements, decide on a social organisation and mechanisms to solve conflicts, and recognise and value ethnic, cultural or religious diversity.

In this perspective, GCE is a type of education that seeks to train citizens who recognise, understand and are willing to think and act globally. This perspective transcends the nation-state and is geared towards the quest for the highest moral imperatives (Cortina 2003), that is, the construction of social justice on a global scale (Torres 2017; Davies 2006). To achieve this, when analysing a news item, people must consider historical, geographic, political, legal, sociological, anthropological, economic and legal factors. This is related to the idea that GCE “empowers individuals: to reflect critically on the legacies and processes of their cultures and contexts, to imagine different futures and to take responsibility for their decisions and actions” (Andreotti 2006, p. 169). We identify with the idea of critical citizenship education in this perspective (Andreotti 2006; Tully 2014).

An approach to GCE, in the opinion of Tarozzi and Inguaggiato (2018) and Scheunpflug and Asbrand (2006), geared at social justice is considered a suitable framework for analysing actions in educational settings because it enables us to see how its core concepts appear and how they are related to other aspects surrounding education in general. In their words, “this conception of GCE echoes one of the roots of GCE theoretical framework which is Freirean pedagogy” (Tarozzi and Inguaggiato 2018, p. 122) because, as Freire posited, “for a more equitable and just society, at the heart of development education’ objectives, people must be able to critically reflect on the world, challenge assumptions that create oppression and reconstruct understanding based on this collaborative inquiry” (Freire 1970, p. 53).

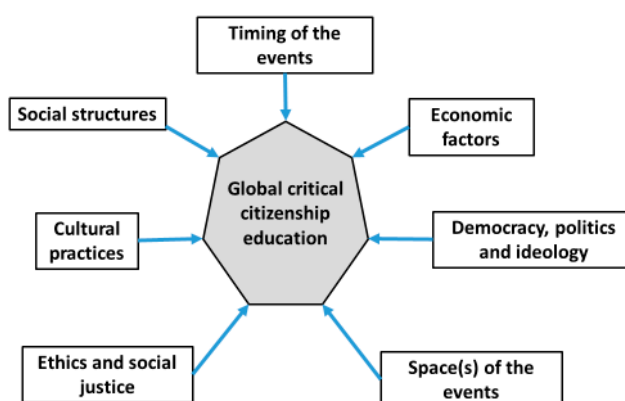
The project theoretical framework approach developed is related to Davies (2006, p. 6), who says that “what seems to happen with global citizenship education is a confirmation of the direct concern with social justice and not just the more minimalist interpretations of global education which are about ‘international awareness’ or being a more rounded person”.

### 3. Teaching the Social Sciences and Global Citizenship Education

Teaching the social sciences, history and geography from a critical, interdisciplinary perspective helps people understand and participate in solving social facts or problems that are increasingly global and affect citizens in different ways (Pagès and Santisteban 2014; Anguera et al. 2018; Torres 2009, 2017), and it helps students gain a better understanding of the relationship between citizenship and globalisation (Rapoport 2009). In this perspective, the project made a theoretical proposal to analyse facts and issues under global citizenship. The criteria for develop in this proposal was a social science discourse with more presence in secondary education and high school. In Spain the Royal Decree 1105 (Government of Spain 2015) established that history and geography are compulsory areas, but it is possible to find references to other humanities and social sciences such as political science, philosophy, sociology, etc.

By examining what each of them can contribute to understanding news items, the following synthesis was reached (Figure 1):

- History enables students to learn about events in time with attributes like the simultaneity or contemporaneity of events.
- Geography enables students to learn about space, territory and people’s interdependence with them.
- Political science enables students to grasp the notions of power, governing systems and political organisation (both national and international).
- Sociology enables students to learn about how societies are organised and work.
- Anthropology enables students to study processes of cultural construction and identity in diverse contexts.
- Economics enables students to gain basic knowledge of resources and wealth and their local and global distribution.
- Ethical factors shape the frameworks that enable students to distinguish between what is just or unjust.



**Figure 1.** Dimensions of critical global citizenship education. Source: Authors.

This way of understanding the interaction between GCE and the curriculum has referents in different authors’ approaches (Andreotti 2006; Shultz 2007; Oxley and Morris 2013) and provided the data analysis with a teleological and conceptual structure based on the assumption that the news items are analysed through the interaction of different sciences or disciplines, with which causal or multi-causal explanations can be constructed (O’Meara et al. 2018). This enabled the research team to trace the global dimension in the responses of the participants, and can answer the research question: When analysing a news item with global implications, do teachers in training use the dimensions of the critical global citizenship education model and which critical literacy achieve?



#### 4. Research Methodology

Participants were selected through convenience sampling (Argibay 2009), based on the ability of the research group to access the target population and its adjustment to the research objectives (Hernández et al. 2010). This type of sampling consists of the self-selection of the sample units without specifying the universe from which they are extracted, according to their possibilities of access (Scribano 2007), and in applying criteria of inclusion–exclusion criteria. The selection criteria for the participating institutions was their active participation in the research project EDU2016-80145-P, financed by the Spanish Government.

The information was obtained from pre-service teachers ( $n = 53$ ) enrolled in a teacher training programme for future secondary school and baccalaureate teachers at universities in two autonomous communities in Spain during academic year 2018–2019 (University 1 (Autonomous University of Barcelona; UAB) = 28, University 2 (University of Málaga; UMA) = 25). This sample is considered representative in the context of the objectives of this project and the university degree selected (Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teaching). The information was collected via a questionnaire in which the students were given a series of cases constructed based on the theoretical framework, which they had to analyse and then share their opinions on. For data collection in this study, because of its controversial nature, one of the cases was selected, which included a single open question: Interpret the image critically according to the people who appear (Figures 2 and 3).

Research on the Social Representations of university students in initial  
teacher training

#### **CG Group: Global citizenship, radical humanism and invisibles**

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##### **Personal information**

First and last name:

Course:

University:

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##### **Guidance**

The activity is carried out individually. ICT can be used (mobile, tablet, pc, etc.). The maximum time to complete it is 45 minutes.

This activity is not of academic interest for any kind of evaluation, it only aims to find out students' opinions on controversial current issues related to media information.

It is important that students respond freely and without any type of conditioning. It is important that all questions are answered.

The results of the survey will be dealt with while maintaining the anonymity of the people participating.

We appreciate your participation.

Group of researchers of the Project EDU2016-80145-P (MINECO)

**Figure 2.** Implementation guidance.

**Activity 1.** Take a look at the following picture taken on 7 July 2017 in Hamburg City (Germany) during an international policy meeting, the G20 summit, composed of the world's largest economies and the European Union.



- Interprets the image critically according to the people who appear.

**Figure 3.** Activity.

The core case, which explicitly represented the relationship between the local and the global, was a photograph of the G20 meeting held on 7 July 2017 in the city of Hamburg (Germany). According to [Santisteban \(2019\)](#), the case entails a controversial factor, because of the global repercussions of these kind the meetings, the small presence of women, cultural practices (dress—colours and style), etc.

For the discursive analysis of the texts generated, a quantitative content analysis was used, through the application of a category system, built from the seven established dimensions (Figure 1), and three levels of literacy: Description, analysis and relation, and interpretation, relation and proposal for social action. Considering the results obtained in didactic research in the field of Spanish teacher training, and in the critical analysis of the official curriculum and curricular materials ([Ortega-Sánchez 2017](#); [Ortega-Sánchez and Pagès 2017](#)), the study aims to identify what levels of literacy the future teacher has acquired and is developing in the comprehension/decoding of textual and iconographic speeches of a social nature. To this end, the three levels mentioned are related to three types of literacy: Literal literacy, inferential literacy and critical literacy, oriented to the development of social thinking skills (critical and creative), and to committed and responsible intervention in social reality ([Santisteban 2015](#)). This analysis combined the collection, uniform coding, categorization and descriptive and interpretative analysis of qualitative data (manifest content), with quantitative data, obtained on the basis of the former through the ad hoc construction of a dimensional scale classifying the units of analysis (student discourses).

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed on the texts based on the frequencies and literacy practices revealed by the students and the presence/absence and textual density of the theoretical attributes of the conceptual model proposed ([Bardin 2002](#); [Krippendorff 1990](#)).

The data obtained were transcribed and organised into a matrix to be analysed ([Miles et al. 2014](#)). This analysis took shape in thematic coding ([Flick 2012](#); [Schreier 2014](#)). The codes were defined based on the theoretical approach, and they were: Timing of the events; economic factors; democracy; politics and ideology; space(s) of the events; ethics and social justice; cultural practices; and social structures. In the analysis of the responses, we identified whether or not there was a reference to the dimensions; if there was, it was assigned one point, while the absence of any reference was assigned zero. If more than one reference to each code appeared, they were scored with the number of times it appeared. This enabled us to identify the frequency with which the dimensions of GCE appeared. The numerical coding and thematic categorization of the qualitative data are reproduced in Figures 4 and 5.

Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teaching - UMA	Levels			Dimensions of critical global citizenship education							Total codes	Code density in relation to the maximum per person (6)	Code density in relation to the group total (78)
	Description	Analysis and relation	Interpretation, Relation and Proposal for Social Action	Timing of the events	Economics factors	Democracy, politics and ideology	Space(s) of the events	Ethics and social justice	Cultural practices	Social structures			
Student 1	1				1	1	1			0	3	50,0	3,85
Student 2		1			1			1		2	4	66,7	5,13
Student 3		1				1				1	2	33,3	2,56
Student 4		1				1		1		1	3	50,0	3,85
Student 5		1				1				1	2	33,3	2,56
Student 6		1			1	1	1		1	1	5	83,3	6,41
Student 7		1			1	2		2		1	6	100,0	7,69
Student 8			1			1	1	1		3	6	100,0	7,69
Student 9		1		1	1	1				0	3	50,0	3,85
Student 10	1				1	1	1			1	3	50,0	3,85
Student 11		1		1		2	1			2	6	100,0	7,69
Student 12	1									1	1	16,7	1,28
Student 13		1				1				2	3	50,0	3,85
Student 14			1			1		1		2	4	66,7	5,13
Student 15		1				1		1		1	3	50,0	3,85
Student 16	1									1	1	16,7	1,28
Student 17		1								2	2	33,3	2,56
Student 18	1					1				1	2	33,3	2,56
Student 19		1			1	1				1	3	50,0	3,85
Student 20		1				1			2	2	5	83,3	6,41
Student 21	1								1	0	1	16,7	1,28
Student 22		1				1				2	3	50,0	3,85
Student 23		1				1				1	2	33,3	2,56
Student 24		1				1			1	1	3	50,0	3,85
Student 25	1					1				1	2	33,3	2,56
	7	16	2	2	6	22	5	7	5	31	78		
	28	64	8	2,56	7,69	28,21	6,41	8,97	6,41	39,74	100,00		

Figure 4. Data emptying matrix—University of Málaga (UMA).

Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teaching - UAB	Levels			Dimensions of critical global citizenship education							Total codes	Code density in relation to the maximum per person (7)	Code density in relation to the group total (78)
	Description	Analysis and relation	Interpretation, Relation and Proposal for Social Action	Timing of the events	Economics factors	Democracy, politics and ideology	Space(s) of the events	Ethics and social justice	Cultural practices	Social structures			
Student 1	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	Nº	%	%
Student 1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	1	6	85,7	4,76
Student 2	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	5	71,4	3,97
Student 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,0	0,00
Student 4	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	7	100,0	5,56
Student 5	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	6	85,7	4,76
Student 6	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	5	71,4	3,97
Student 7	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	4	57,1	3,17
Student 8	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	4	57,1	3,17
Student 9	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	5	71,4	3,97
Student 10	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	28,6	1,59
Student 11	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	4	57,1	3,17
Student 12	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	42,9	2,38
Student 13	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	3	42,9	2,38
Student 14	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	5	71,4	3,97
Student 15	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	5	71,4	3,97
Student 16	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	1	6	85,7	4,76
Student 17	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	2	6	85,7	4,76
Student 18	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	5	71,4	3,97
Student 19	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	5	71,4	3,97
Student 20	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	57,1	3,17
Student 21	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	5	71,4	3,97	
Student 22	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	4	57,1	3,17
Student 23	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	4	57,1	3,17
Student 24	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	5	71,4	3,97
Student 25	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	5	71,4	3,97
Student 26	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	6	85,7	4,76
Student 27	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	28,6	1,59
Student 28	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	5	71,4	3,97
	5	22	0	2	21	45	11	6	10	31	126		100,00
	18,5	81,5	0	1,59	16,67	35,71	8,73	4,76	7,94	24,60	100,00		

Figure 5. Data emptying matrix—University of Barcelona (UAB).

With the results of this coding, the respondents were classified on a three-level scale which corresponded to what the project assumed to be literacy levels, meant as “the capacity to read between the lines and beyond what is said and to identify the socio-historical and ideological underpinnings and intentionality behind books, images, videos and media” (Castellví et al. 2019, p. 25). Similar scales were used by Bruce et al. (2019) in their study. The scale proposed in this study is:

1. Teachers who focused on the description of the events; that is, those who only referred to the factual aspects of the photograph. These individuals mentioned one or two codes/dimensions: “They are the leaders of the governments of the G20 member countries. The position in which they are established is according to their global importance, so at the beginning, there are leaders like Putin and Trump, and in the end, Mariano Rajoy is smiling. Merkel is located in the centre, because her country that hosts the meeting” (S27UAB).



2. Teachers who focused on analysis; that is, they identified the factual aspects of the photograph and interpreted what the meeting meant. They mentioned three or four codes/dimensions: “The heads of government of the strongest economies in the world meet often. Why? To strengthen their trade relations and strengthen their power over the rest of the world? This image is a clear expression of inequality in the world, where power and resources are in the hands of the few, and the rest must be satisfied with what little they have, if any. Inequality is also a term for sexes, where of 36 representatives, there are only 4 women.” (S11UAB).

3. Critical teachers, that is, those who interpreted the photograph and made suggestions on how to change reality. These individuals mentioned four or more codes/dimensions, with which they analysed the photograph and proposed actions: “In the picture we can see a sample of the patriarchy that is still settled in the institutions and in the spheres of power. It is more difficult for women to arrive, it is a fact, and they have not yet taken the place they deserve, and it is something that must be claimed starting with ourselves from the education itself.” (S8UMA).

The correspondence between the number of dimensions and their classification on the scale is due to the fact that using a larger number of codes/dimensions means that people are capable of analysing social facts or cases with a broader, more interdependent and complex perspective and therefore situate themselves within the critical global citizenship education perspective. In order to confirm or refute this assumption, descriptive statistics (frequency and contingency tables) were used, and to determine whether or not there was a significant association among the variables in the study and statistically significant differences between the participating institutions, Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated and the Mann–Whitney–Wilcoxon *U*-test was applied. This shed light on the consistency of the coding (Schreier 2014). The goal of this study was not to measure but to understand how the pre-service teachers reflected the concept of GCE and the dimensions posited in the theoretical section in the case analysis. Therefore, this study does not seek to explain experimental cause–effect relations, typical of explanatory studies, but rather the verification of interdependence relations between the variables considered with a comparative objective. Consequently, the study corresponds to the non-experimental designs, of cross-sectional, descriptive, comparative and inferential scope.

This study met the ethical requirements for research with human beings according to the fundamental principles established in the Declaration of Helsinki, and it was approved by the University Senate of the Autonomous University of Barcelona on January 30 of 2013.

## 5. Results

In this section, we present the results of the analysis and the answer research question. We first discuss the descriptive analysis and secondly the inferential analysis; also included are highlighted text passages, obtained from student responses, that characterize each identified trend. Generally speaking, the data are homogeneous.

A total of 53 people responded to the questionnaire; 52.8% ( $n = 28$ ) were from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB/ $U_1$ ) and 47.2% ( $n = 25$ ) were from the University of Málaga (UMA/ $U_2$ ). We did not have full access to the gender variable since responding to this item was not obligatory.

The quantitative data analysis was performed based on the frequency of text entries related to the literacy practices observed in the students’ texts (description, analysis and association; and interpretation, association and proposal of social action), and with the explanatory dimensions of education for democratic, critical and global citizenship, according to the following codes: 0 = zero text entries, 1 = one text entry, 2 = two text entries, 3 = three text entries. Likewise, the levels of textual density corresponding to the following theoretical dimensions were measured: (1) Between one and three text entries, (2) between four and six text entries, (3) seven or more text entries.

The following quotes reflect the literacy practices and dimensions: Description level “is an international policy meeting, white men predominate, as always”; analysis and association level “is an international policy meeting, the G20, the representatives of the most powerful economies are mostly men, excepting 3 or 4 women. Thus, a system can be affirmed in which the power figures continue

to be men”; interpretation, association and proposal of social action level: “There are two points of views. The first one shows the lack of female presence. In the other hand that 1 of the 2 women is placed in the centre of the image, probably intentionally. This is a social problem. It cannot be the little female presence in the international political power. We must make ourselves heard, that the female presence grows at the international level, but for that to happen, it must first be born at the national level. Women have the same capacities; we should not have any impediment”.

The results for each of the theoretical dimensions of critical global citizenship education (CGCE) reveal at least one text entry per student, with the majority of references related to democracy, politics and ideology ( $f. = 29, 54.7\%$ ) and social structures ( $f. = 30, 56.6\%$ ) (Table 1). There is a noticeable absence of references related to the timing of the events and their spatial context ( $f. = 49, 92.5\%$ ;  $f. = 37, 69.8\%$ ), economic factors ( $f. = 29, 54.7\%$ ), ethics and social justice ( $f. = 42, 79.2\%$ ) and cultural practices ( $f. = 41, 77.4\%$ ). The data show no statistically significant differences between the two universities, except on dimensions 5—economic factors ( $U = 203.000, z = -2.995, p = 0.003$ )—and 6—democracy, politics and ideology ( $U = 177.000, z = -3.406, p = 0.001$ )—with  $U_1$  having a stronger presence in both areas ( $f. = 18, 64.3\%$ ;  $f. = 26, 92.9\%$ ).

The students tended to react to the news item proposed at medium levels of textual density, that is, with between four and six text entries referring to one or several of the explanatory theoretical dimensions ( $f. = 29, 54.7\%$ ).  $U_1$  showed the highest frequencies at this level ( $f. = 22, 78.6\%$ ) ( $U = 157.000, z = -3.958, p = 0.000$ ).

The three levels of literacy at which the seven dimensions are addressed reveal the existence of significant differences between the participating institutions in the level of descriptive skills ( $U = 173.000, z = -3.657, p = 0.000$ ). Specifically, the students in the first university ( $U_1$ ) ( $f. = 22, 78.6\%$ ) are more skilled at receiving and critically understanding the texts and images than those enrolled in the second university ( $U_2$ ) ( $f. = 7, 28\%$ ). Despite the fact that, at identical percentages, the use of these skills is complemented with the preferential use of analysis and association skills by  $U_1$  ( $f. = 22, 78.6\%$ ), the differences between institutions do not yield significant differential values. Likewise, the skill of critically receiving texts and iconographies (interpretation, association and proposal of social action) shows results in  $U_2$  ( $f. = 2.8\%$ ), but without significant differences compared to  $U_1$ .

The correlational analysis reveals the existence of low inverse interdependence associations between the application of the students’ skills of interpretation, association and proposal for social action and the skills of analysis and association. The more textual references related to these latter skills, the lower the reading practices associated with critical literacy ( $\rho = -0.315, p = 0.022$ ) (Table 2).

The data also reveal that the skills of description, analysis and association bear a minor influence on the construction of text references on economic factors ( $\rho = 0.310, p = 0.024$ ;  $\rho = 0.324, p = 0.018$ ), just as the skills of analysis and association do in association with the explanatory dimension of social structures ( $\rho = 0.297, p = 0.031$ ). Likewise, in references to social structures, there was a low association of significant dependence with the skills of interpretation, association and proposal of social action ( $\rho = 0.367, p = 0.007$ ) and of the latter with the ethical and social justice aspects of critical global citizenship ( $\rho = 0.315, p = 0.022$ ).

Finally, the references associated with the ethical and social justice aspects revealed the existence of a low inverse association with the references to cultural practices. The more text references on cultural aspects, the fewer ethical references there were ( $\rho = -0.274, p = 0.047$ ).

**Table 1.** Descriptive and inferential statistics.

	V.	ft	U <sub>1</sub>		U <sub>2</sub>		Total		U	W	z	p
			(n = 28)		(n = 25)		(N = 53)					
Literacy levels	V <sub>1</sub>	0	6	21.4%	18	12%	24	45.3%	173.000	498.000	−3.657	0.000 **
		1	22	78.6%	7	28%	29	54.7%				
	V <sub>2</sub>	0	6	21.4%	6	36%	15	28.3%	299.000	624.000	−1.164	0.244
		1	22	78.6%	16	64%	38	71.1%				
	V <sub>3</sub>	0	28	100%	23	92%	51	96.2%	322.000	728.000	−1.511	0.131
		1	0	0.0%	2	8.0%	2	3.8%				
Dimensions of critical global citizenship education (CGCE)	V <sub>4</sub>	0	26	92.9%	23	92%	49	92.5%	347.000	753.000	−0.117	0.907
		1	2	7.1%	2	8.0%	4	7.5%				
	V <sub>5</sub>	0	10	35.7%	19	76%	29	54.7%	203.000	528.000	−2.995	0.003 **
		1	16	57.1%	6	24%	22	41.5%				
		2	1	3.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.9%				
	V <sub>6</sub>	3	1	3.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	177.000	502.000	−3.406	0.001 **
		0	2	7.1%	5	20%	7	13.2%				
		1	11	39.3%	18	72%	29	54.7%				
		2	11	39.3%	2	8.0%	13	24.5%				
	V <sub>7</sub>	3	4	14.3%	0	0.0%	4	7.5%	282.500	607.500	−1.512	0.130
		0	17	60.7%	20	80%	37	69.8%				
		1	11	39.3%	5	20%	16	30.2%				
	V <sub>8</sub>	0	23	82.1%	19	76%	42	79.2%	329.000	735.000	−0.530	0.596
		1	4	14.3%	5	20%	9	17%				
		2	1	3.6%	1	4.0%	2	3.8%				
	V <sub>9</sub>	0	20	71.4%	21	84%	41	77.4%	306.000	631.000	−1.075	0.283
		1	6	21.4%	3	12%	9	17%				
		2	2	7.1%	1	4.0%	3	5.7%				
V <sub>10</sub>	0	5	17.9%	3	12%	8	15.1%	315.000	721.000	−0.697	0.486	
	1	16	57.1%	14	56%	30	56.6%					
	2	6	21.4%	7	28%	13	24.5%					
	3	1	3.6%	1	4.0%	2	3.8%					
Textual density	V <sub>11</sub>	n <sub>1</sub>	5	17.9%	18	72%	23	43.4%	157.000	482.000	−3.958	0.000 **
		n <sub>2</sub>	22	78.6%	7	28%	29	54.7%				
		n <sub>3</sub>	1	3.6%	0	0.0%	1	1.9%				

\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ . V.: Variable. V<sub>1</sub> (description), V<sub>2</sub> (analysis and association), V<sub>3</sub> (interpretation, association and proposal of social action), V<sub>4</sub> (timing of the events), V<sub>5</sub> (economic factors), V<sub>6</sub> (democracy, politics and ideology), V<sub>7</sub> (space(s) of the events), V<sub>8</sub> (ethics and social justice), V<sub>9</sub> (cultural practices), V<sub>10</sub> (social structures) and V<sub>11</sub> (textual density). ft: Frequencies of textual entry. n<sub>x</sub>: Levels of textual density (dimensions of GCE).

**Table 2.** Spearman correlations among variables.

	V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>	V <sub>4</sub>	V <sub>5</sub>	V <sub>6</sub>	V <sub>7</sub>	V <sub>8</sub>	V <sub>9</sub>	V <sub>10</sub>
V <sub>1</sub>	1									
V <sub>2</sub>	0.102	1								
V <sub>3</sub>	-0.218	-0.315 *	1							
V <sub>4</sub>	-0.027	0.180	-0.057	1						
V <sub>5</sub>	0.310 *	0.324 *	-0.178	0.152	1					
V <sub>6</sub>	0.157	0.219	-0.072	0.005	0.199	1				
V <sub>7</sub>	0.268	0.048	0.085	-0.032	-0.041	0.099	1			
V <sub>8</sub>	-0.093	0.122	0.367 **	0.023	0.136	-0.065	-0.044	1		
V <sub>9</sub>	0.214	0.244	-0.106	-0.154	0.101	0.023	0.151	-0.274 *	1	
V <sub>10</sub>	-0.054	0.297*	0.315 *	0.164	-0.095	-0.139	0.207	0.207	-0.114	1

\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ .

## 6. Discussion

The theoretical perspective framing this study was [Ortega-Sánchez and Pagès's \(2020\)](#) critical global citizenship education, which pays particular attention to the role people can play in recognising and acting against global injustices. To do so, it is essential to identify the hegemonic ideological dimensions of news items in order to move towards building global social justice. People can be located at different levels of literacy, which is critical when they interpret news items and propose actions for change. The literacy levels enable us to identify whether people have or are close to having a critical perspective of global citizenship.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the educational relevance of working with controversial topics in the social science classroom ([Ortega-Sánchez and Pagès 2020](#); [Ortega-Sánchez and Jiménez-Eguizábal 2019](#)). Likewise, it has been shown that the curricular inclusion of these issues favours the promotion of the concept of active citizenship in educational contexts for democratic citizenship ([Pollak et al. 2017](#)), and the development and acquisition of critical-reflective thinking skills ([Misco 2013](#)), especially absent in the curriculum and training plans of future teachers in Spain.

Working with controversial issues, such as the one presented in this study, favours the learning of values and democratic participation as educational objectives. Talking about education for citizen participation or for the exercise of active citizenship implies reflecting on the way of teaching in order to intervene, from commitment and responsibility, in relevant social problems or controversial issues. Despite the progress made, there is still a need to design educational programmes and practices specifically aimed at the treatment of social problems and intervention in the community from the perspective of active citizenship ([Ortega-Sánchez and Jiménez-Eguizábal 2019](#)).

The data show that there is little association between CGCE and levels of critical literacy. As [Kim \(2019\)](#) and [Tarozzi and Mallon \(2019\)](#) have pointed out, this may be due to the few opportunities for CGCE to be part of teacher training, nor were there any references to postcolonial discourses, which may be due to the excessive presence of the Eurocentric perspective in the training programmes for teachers of history and social sciences. The postcolonial discourse tends to be core in theoretical approaches to CGCE ([Andreotti 2006](#)) in reaction to Eurocentric discourses or those centred on economic factors, which tend to be hegemonic.

The analysis shows that pre-service teachers manage to establish associations between the global and local scales, as also found in the studies by [Tarozzi and Inguaggiato \(2018\)](#) and [Goren and Yemini \(2017b\)](#), but this association is limited to statements of several dimensions of GCE which are used to understand news items, while few reach the level of CGCE. These findings match those in Turkey from [Çolak et al. \(2019\)](#); that is, when faced with a news item, there is evidence of an interdependence between the two scales. Both studies also concur on the idea of fostering better understanding of what it means to be a global citizen in the critical perspective geared at seeking greater social justice.

The data show that the future teachers do manage to make connections between the event presented and the global dimension, in this case associated with the negative consequences of the economic decisions taken at gatherings like the one illustrated in the photograph. These findings are coherent with those of [Tarozzi and Inguaggiato \(2018\)](#) and [Goren and Yemini \(2017b\)](#). The consequences cited by the participants were associated with the weakness of democracy, politics and social structures.

The participants managed to associate the consequences of globalisation with the news item analysed ([Goren and Yemini 2017a](#)), but they offered few actions to counter the negative consequences of globalisation. In this regard, we concur with [Goren and Yemini \(2017b\)](#) that it is essential to provide tools to go beyond a mere analysis of the events and reach true CGCE.

In terms of literacy, the findings show that most pre-service teachers are located at the analysis level. This matches what [Bruce et al. \(2019\)](#) found in their study, and it takes shape in greater importance being attached to the liberal humanistic dimension. Both studies show that the analysis or understanding of a news item is an essential component of CGCE, but action-transformation proposals truly embody the critical perspective. The two studies differed in their assessment of the effects of globalisation. In the findings of [Bruce et al. \(2019\)](#), globalisation is positively valued in people's



lives, while in our study, the participants associate it with negative aspects like poverty, inequality, a concentration of wealth, exploitation, etc. (Torres 2009, 2015, 2017).

Regarding the critical level, the analysis showed several differences with the findings of O'Meara et al. (2018). Both studies were framed within a critical perspective and undertook an analysis of a news item associated with the effects of globalisation (migrations, conflicts, etc.). The study by O'Meara et al. (2018) found that respondents reached some level of awareness or critical thinking of the news item analysed. In contrast, this study shows a lower critical level. This comparison is pertinent because both studies were approached from the critical perspective and with similar events associated with the process of globalisation.

Related to the dimensions, the people located at the critical level share the fact that their responses referred to aspects associated with democracy, politics and ideology, ethics and justice and social structures. Based on these dimensions, the actions that emerged were geared towards changing unjust situations associated with discrimination against women and lowering poverty levels. These findings directly reflect the CGCE and critical literacy approaches of Ortega-Sánchez and Pagès (2017), who suggest that pre-service teachers who will teach the social sciences have to try to make social justice a teaching goal. They particularly noted that "the invisibility of people and social groups . . . prevents them from being identified as those involved in the news items and further limits the constructive pluralisation of their own personal and social identities" (Ortega-Sánchez and Pagès 2017, p. 115).

The textual dimension suggests that pre-service teachers analyse the news items from different dimensions, the most common ones being democracy, politics and ideology, and social structures. The absence of references to the timing or spatial context of the events was striking because the teachers participating in these trainings often came from degree programmes in history and geography. It was interesting that references to ethics and social justice were the essential difference between those located on a critical level and those who were not. These findings match those of O'Meara et al. (2018), who found similar references in their study. These dimensions appear explicitly in the approaches of Andreotti (2006), Davies (2006) and Oxley and Morris (2013) when they state that CGCE should explicitly include the quest for social justice.

The data show that overall there are few references to the economic dimension. This is interesting since economics is at the core of the event in the news item. These results differ from what Bruce et al. (2019) found, which is that the participants referred to economic factors in their way of understanding GCE, and even if these factors were not at the core, they did occupy an important position.

The three levels of literacy proposed show that the people who responded to the questionnaires were essentially at the analysis level, followed by the descriptive level and finally the critical level. No combination of two levels was found in the data, unlike the findings of Bruce et al. (2019), who did identify combinations of the critical and descriptive levels. In this study, the critical level had a low incidence in the results. This leads us to posit that it is difficult to achieve critical global citizenship education if teachers do not reach equivalent levels of understanding. In order to overcome a more descriptive or positivistic perspective, Bruce et al. (2019, p. 14) suggest that it is "crucial to disrupt the hegemonic structures and belief systems which have brought us to this global crisis. Technician and humanistic approaches serve largely to shore up and reinforce the status quo".

## 7. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, we can conclude that pre-service teachers are far from materialising a CGCE geared at social justice (Sant 2018). There is still a need to develop and implement proposals that allow pre-service teachers to address and understand the implications of globalisation. In this vein, we concur with Howe (2013) and O'Meara et al. (2018, p. 16), who suggest that "only when GCE capacity-building becomes part of a teacher education core-curriculum, will these global concerns sustainably be addressed, implemented, and assessed". One way of developing a better understanding of CGCE may be using strategies that favour associations between globalisation and

news items by analysing cases, or even service learning (Kopish 2016) or global education programmes, such as the EU's Erasmus Programme (Larsen and Searle 2017), which explicitly address aspects of global citizenship.

With regard to the question that guided the research—when analysing a news item with global implications, do teachers in training which critical literacy achieve and use the dimensions of the critical global citizenship education model and which critical literacy achieve?—the teachers performing the analysis of the case used three or four dimensions, usually politics, democracy and social structure, while they left out at least half of the dimensions. The people located at the critical level included the majority of dimensions in their analysis. Another difference found was that the people on this level considered the ethics and social justice dimension. These findings pose a new question: What should be done in pre-service teacher training to achieve a level of CGCE in a case analysis? Below we shall outline several proposals.

Teacher training programmes must include spaces that allow for debate on news items with a global perspective (Kim 2019; Tarozzi and Mallon 2019; Sant 2018) in order for CGCE to have a greater presence in teacher training. By doing so, teachers will better understand the global dimensions of news items (O'Meara et al. 2018).

CGCE can only reach classrooms provided that pre-service teachers understand and work with news items that reflect the effects of globalisation (Yang et al. 2017) and include the critical perspective of global citizenship. The data show that the participants are working in this direction, but teacher training programmes still need to make a greater effort to bring in historical, geographic, political and economic factors, and even factors associated with social structures and ethical considerations and the quest for social justice (González 2013; González and Santisteban 2016). Only in this way will they produce critical teachers geared at social transformation and overcoming the negative consequences of globalisation processes.

The proposal of the CGCE dimensions and literacy levels to analyse information can be viewed as a means of working towards overcoming the Eurocentric perspective that characterises the way history, geography and the social sciences, as well as teacher training, are taught. The theoretical proposal was pertinent because it shed light on how pre-service teachers analyse news items via the dimensions and levels proposed. The key point in overcoming this perspective entails addressing the consequences of globalisation in other parts of the world. In other words, the goal is to overcome 20th century colonialism and 21st century neo-colonialism and to build a world that calls for a globalisation more permeated with social justice. To achieve this, a critical look at global citizenship education is needed (Andreotti 2006; Oxley and Morris 2013).

The data show that ethics and social justice are two dimensions present at the critical level, so they should have a core place in the design of training proposals targeted at analysing an event that reflects GCE. One way to bring this to fruition would be by using socially timely questions or relevant social problems, as proposed by Santisteban and Santisteban and González-Monfort (2018), Ortega-Sánchez and Olmos (2018), Davies (2006) and Davies et al. (2005), because they question the established order and the way the social sciences, history, geography and global citizenship are taught.

A limitation of this study is the political moment (global and local), because the particular social factors may have an influence on the answers to the questions, although the sample is future teachers. Citizenship, democracy and political education are influenced by many aspects; it is necessary to carry out research on these. The methodological approach was quantitative, which is usual in political studies, but in the future it will be necessary to do qualitative analyses.

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