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The Impact of a Global Education Program on the Critical Global Awareness Level of Eighth Grade Students in a Rural School in South Carolina

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Eighth Grade Students in a Rural School in South Carolina

by

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Dedication

To my children, Kristina and Maxim.

Abstract

Over the past few years of teaching at a school district in a southeastern state, the researcher noticed that her students had become increasingly interested in various global topics. Students wanted to talk about world events and cultures around the world, but they had a limited understanding of their own roles as world citizens. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of global education program on the critical global awareness levels of eighth grade students at East Bridge Middle School. This researcher analyzed the effects of global education program on the critical global awareness level of eighth grade students using action research. This researcher studied the impact of the program on eight participants. Five female and three male participants enrolled in a global education elective class at East Bridge Middle School and met every other day for 90 minutes. The data analysis showed three major themes: the lack of student exposure to global education topics at school, the need for students to make more cross-cultural connections, and the student enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge with others. These developed from student interviews, journal writings, and researcher's field note observations. There was a significant impact; however, further research was needed to analyze the major effects of global education curriculum and the long-term influence on students. Through learning about citizenship, students became more aware of diverse cultures, the need to accept such diversity, and the ways to promote it within their communities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Adding a global education component to the regular curriculum involves advancements of social and civic education through a change of worldwide perspectives, examination of contemporary global issues, and education of students to be global citizens who empathize and understand other people, cultures, and countries (deNobile, Kleeman, & Zarkos, 2014). Dewey (1916) and Freire (1972) cited educational philosophies that centered around curriculum as an integral part of social reconstruction, emphasizing student experiences, their constructive application of acquired information, and their imagination to improve social conditions.

Furthermore, a global education curriculum reflects such progressive education, bringing together the focus on the development of the individual and the student's experiences (Dewey, 1916) and the need for creating a more just and equitable society (Freire, 1972). Carefully integrated into general curriculum, a global education component transfers every day learning into creating change at students' personal and social levels, which are integral to Dewey's (1916) and Freire's (1972) educational philosophies (Breithorde & Swiniarski, 1999).

Global education has increased in popularity over the last few decades, yet several authors have cited a lack of specific research on the effectiveness of the various global education programs (Bourn & Hunt, 2011; Hicks, 2003; Zhao, Lin,& Hodge, 2007). These researchers agree on the importance of global education and its positive impact on student behavior, attitude, and character development. However,

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such research is limited, which led the researcher to investigate the effects of global education curriculum in this study.

Statement of the Problem of Practice (PoP)

Over the past few years of teaching at a school district in a southeastern state, the researcher noticed that her students had become increasingly interested in various global topics. Students wanted to talk about world events and cultures around the world. Yet, when they were asked more specific questions about global citizenship, students had a limited understanding of their own roles as world citizens. There seemed to be both an interest and a need to develop a global education program; therefore, the researcher decided to introduce one at her school.

This researcher held informal conversations with students during class instructions, change of classes, and other breaks to identify the level of their global awareness. Most students expressed interest and engagement in conversations, but there was a lack of understanding of some global concepts, such as citizenship, interdependence, globalization, and democracy. Most students understood some global education concepts, but the researcher questioned whether this knowledge could be further extended by introducing a global education curriculum.

After looking into various global education programs, the teacher met with a school principal to share findings and discuss the opportunity of creating an elective class at the school. The principal was supportive and liked the idea, especially that it was aligned with the newly adapted model of a Profile of a South Carolina Graduate with an emphasis on world-class knowledge and world-class skills. Furthermore, this

idea was shared with the superintendent and received an approval with much anticipation from both school administrators, as well as students and their parents.

In August 2017, East Bridge Middle School started offering an elective that incorporated components of global education and global citizenship to increase the global awareness level of eighth graders at the school. This researcher aimed to expose students to such topics as global diversity, environmental issues, human rights issues, sustainable development, world hunger and poverty, globalization, discrimination, interdependency of communities and democracy, to name a few. At the beginning of each semester, she would survey students to discover their interests to create lessons based on common interests, as well as a lack of knowledge or even a strong prejudice on a particular topic. This researcher believed it was important to incorporate student interests to let them drive the curriculum to support the development of global awareness and responsible world citizenship through global learning.

Hanvey (1976) described global awareness and its effects on education:

Education for a global perspective is that learning which enhances the individual's ability to understand his or her condition in the community and the world and improves the ability to make effective judgments. It includes the study of nations, cultures, and civilizations, including our own pluralistic society and the societies of other peoples, with a focus on understanding how these are all interconnected and how they change, and on the individual's responsibility in this process. It provides the individual with a realistic perspective on world issues, problems and prospects, and an awareness of the

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relationships between an individual's enlightened self-interest and the concerns of people elsewhere in the world. (p.1)

Moreover, White (2002) stated, "Students who can think for themselves and look critically at societal problems will find their classroom a more exciting and challenging place . . . [and] engaging students in learning through dialogue enhances their journey to knowledge and competency" (p.265). White (2002) defined global awareness as a complex concept that began with one shaping one's attitudes.

Goodson (2005) stated that those initiating a global education program recognized that the world had become smaller, and they offered more possibilities of inclusiveness toward all cultures. Many students expressed eagerness to learn more about global topics, and they expressed excitement about the opportunity of connecting with schools in different countries. Students could use this opportunity to help them reflect not only on their own viewpoints but also on the importance of understanding other people.

To clarify further, global education should not be considered a distinct course; rather, leadership should treat the course as the perspective of viewing various events and activities in diverse ways (Dove, 2002). Tye (2003) defined global education as learning that involved aspects of life that crossed all boundaries. Pike and Selby (1988) agreed that global education was a study of how cultures interacted, which led to student understanding of the importance to act in the interests of their local, national, and international communities. One should also acknowledge that global perspective had a considerable influence on not only social and emotional development of students but also on their cognitive development. As students began

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to compare themselves and their cultures to other cultures around the world, they began making important reflections that encompassed critical values needed to become active citizens.

Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) concluded that when educators created practices that focused on students' social and emotional learning needs by widely incorporating them in the instruction, the effects were overwhelmingly positive. Global education was founded on concepts of collaboration, socialization, and various levels of critical reflections; therefore, one must include a global perspective in all forms of teaching (see Zins et al., 2004).Crawford and Kirby (2008) stated, "Global awareness should not be viewed as a passing fad for educational reform. On the contrary, our students' futures depend on it" (p. 56).

Research Question

What impact will a global education program have on the critical global awareness level of eighth-grade students at East Bridge Middle School?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of global education program on the critical global awareness levels of eighth grade students at East Bridge Middle School. Based on Harvey (1976), Israel (2002), Pike and Selby (1988), Stromquist (2002), and Tye (2003), increased critical awareness was defined by students' abilities to identify with being part of an emerging world community and to contribute to building their communities' values and practices. Through learning about citizenship and increasing their global awareness levels, students became more aware of diverse cultures, the need to accept such diversity, and the ways to promote

it within their community. They could better define their roles as local and global citizens and the actions they need to take to model and encourage others to learn about global citizenship. Finally, they became problem-solvers using critical thinking and decision-making skills, as well as through communicating well with others.

Methodology

Educators use action research to engage a systematic approach in their own practices and then make changes based on what was learned from the inquiry process (Mertler, 2014). This study involved the researcher collecting and analyzing the data, reviewing current literature, adjusting instructional methods, and sharing the results to help teachers gain deeper understanding of their practices, their students, and their schools. Mertler (2014) stated that action research "focuses specifically on the unique characteristics of the population with whom a practice is employed" (p.4).

Out of 25 students enrolled in an elective global education class, the first eight who turned in their parental consent forms were chosen as the participants. The goal of this class was to engage students in cross-curricular units of study to provide them with a better understanding of local, regional, and global implications of being global citizens. Students used higher-order thinking skills, such as problem solving, data analysis, and creative thinking, to examine political, social, cultural, and economic issues critically in various countries and regions. For example, they learned to recognize that groups, such as children and women, have rights that must be defended and explored to understand the role of international organizations in protecting their human rights. Additionally, students identified and examined ways the United States

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responded to regional and global movements and events, and the ways it was affected by these moments.

The study took place at East Bridge Middle School in a southeastern state. East Bridge was one of seven middle schools in the district and served a little over 1,000 students in Grades 6 through 8. The school was located close to a military base as well as a few international manufacturing plants. Thus, leadership at East Bridge hosted several transient students each year, whose families often moved locally, nationally, and internationally.

This researcher used a qualitative methodological design to examine the influence of global education program on the critical global awareness level of eighth-grade students. Unlike traditional researchers who seek answers through scientific methods and use mostly qualitative (inductive) versus quantitative (deductive) methods, action researchers incorporate reflective teaching and apply diverse models of action research (Mertler, 2014). Action researchers can connect theory to practice, which may influence school improvement and teacher empowerment.

Students completed a value and attitudes survey that served as a pretest as well as posttest. The researchers used observation field notes and student journal entries to analyze students' attitudes toward global topics discussed in class. Informal interviews provided additional information to monitor students' growth and changes in attitude. Data were collected on a regular basis in a systematic and organized manner. These were then used to determine what impact, if any, a global education

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program had on the critical global awareness level of eighth-grade students at East Bridge Middle School.

Significance of the Study

The benefit of global education is that it helps students understand their own identities better. Global educators advance students' communication skills and allow them to think globally about critical issues both locally and worldwide. Students who receive an opportunity to participate in discussions and projects that reach around the globe become more engaged with the learning process; hence, they gain a valuable understanding of critical issues around the world.

Banks (2004) stated that global educators helped students acquire knowledge and skills that they needed to possess in a fast-growing world consisting of diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic groups. Furthermore, he concluded that global education was closely related to social justice. Banks (2004) emphasized that the former helped students develop a commitment to the society to be more just.

This researcher measured the influence of the global education program on the level of students' critical global awareness. She encouraged them to participate in the creation of a socially just culture within their communities to embody democratic ideas and values to become active citizens in the global community. The researcher hoped that students could see a balance of unity and diversity that defined citizenship education in this multicultural society.

This researcher observed patterns in students' thinking and understanding of the global education. Through the pre- and posttest, informal interviews, student journal writing, and observational field notes, the researcher measured the impact of a

global education program on eight students' attitudes and beliefs about global awareness.

Limitations or Potential Weaknesses

The major limitation of this study was the sample size, which only included eight participants. The research was limited to one classroom and could not be generalized to the entire eighth grade population of students at East Bridge Middle School. The focus was on one elective global education class that was not offered at any other school in the district. Thus, any generalizations were limited to other students, classrooms, or public schools.

Dissertation in Practice (DiP) Overview

Chapter 1 provided a broad overview of the global education topic and introduced a problem of practice. It included a research question, summary of the statement of problem, the purpose of the research, and its methodology. Chapter 1 included descriptions of the significance of the study, its limitations, and concluded with a definition of terms.

Chapter 2 provides the review of literature with the purpose of the review and key concepts. In Chapter 3, methodology is described in detail, including the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem of practice, and a research design. This chapter also includes procedures and data analysis, as well as plans for reflecting with participants on data and for devising an action plan.

Chapter 4 provides the reader with the findings and interpretations of results. Finally, Chapter 5 serves as a summary and discussion, which includes an overview,

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in addition to discussion of major points, action plans, and implications of the findings of the study. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

Definitions of Terms

Global awareness: Global awareness refers to students' abilities to identify with being a part of an emerging world community to contribute to building their communities' values and practices (Harvey, 1976; Israel, 2002; Pike & Selby, 1988; Stromquist, 2002; Tye, 2003). Examples include one becoming more aware of diverse cultures, the need to accept such diversity, and the ways to promote it within their community; being able to better define their role as local and global citizens and the actions they need to take in order to model and encourage others to learn about global citizenship; and using critical thinking and decision making skills to problem solve and communicate well with others.

Global citizen: Global citizen refers to someone who identifies with being a part of an emerging global community and whose actions contribute to building this community's values and practices (Israel, 2002).

Global education: Global education refers to a study of how cultures interact, leading to the empowerment of students to act in matters of local, national, and international interests (Pike & Selby, 1988), as well as a learning process that introduces students to aspects of life among various cultures (Tye, 2003).

Globalization: Globalization is a continuous process, an action that describes the connectedness of groups around local communities, countries, and continents (Stromquist, 2002).

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Andreotti (2006) argued that the world still had a long way to develop. Andreotti emphasized that the current approach of segregating the world between first and third world countries showed that some countries had more power and privilege over others. To break these stereotypes, Andreotti urged the world of education to reconsider this approach by teaching students that all were equal and had a right to influence the world in the same way. According to Andreotti, students should be taught to think critically about the relationships created by exercising power over others to think of alternative ways of creating equal opportunities for all countries of the world.

To that end, this review of literature first provides a historical perspective, then it discusses such concepts as globalization, global citizenship, and global education. The review further provides insight into theoretical perspectives, as well as the framework that the research study is based on.

Historical Perspectives

The first ideas of humans being world citizens appeared in Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire (Heater, 1996). Leadership further developed these ideas during the European Renaissance in the 16th and 17th centuries, which later became popular during European Enlightenment in 18th century (Carter, 2001). In the early 20th century, various educational organization leaders turned their focus to

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international issues and began introducing curricula that revolved around them (Carter, 2001). By the mid-1940s, the United Nations started integrating numerous educational approaches to develop the field to the international issues and concerns. Leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) started promoting a unique way of teaching that fostered world peace by understanding the cultures around the world (Rauner, 1998). The UN General Assembly (1948) created a Universal Declaration that included the idea of global citizenship:

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (Article 26, para.2)

Both the USSR and the United States focused on education as a strategic tool in the decades following World War II (De Wit, 2002). Leadership of both nations supported international education to understand better the rest of the world and to gain and expand their influence over other countries (De Wit, 2002). In the United States in particular, the passing of Fulbright Act in 1946 became a turnaround point in the history of global education (Johnson & Colligan, 1965). Leadership created the act to support university students in various countries around the world in their educational endeavors, thereby reflecting William Fulbright's (1966) belief in the power of international exchange of cultural and political values and viewpoints.

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The U.S government had an interest in introducing U.S. culture and history to the rest of the world by funding the international student exchange program through Fulbright Act of 1946 (Johnson & Colligan, 1965). At the same time, this government supported educational organizations and institutions in other developing countries to create various research administrations within universities of these countries (De Wit, 2002). Thus, the United States could positively influence these regions of the world while racing the USSR in a similar effort (De Wit, 2002).

In 1950, the world changed drastically following the emergence of the global economy and a technological revolution influencing economic and political relationships between different regions of the world (Biddle, 2002). During the Cold War, global citizenship education in the United States had a brief downturn as the international agenda faded in the background of more important national issues (Rauner, 1998). Educational curriculum shifted its focus back to national subjects and concerns using traditional approaches, and only world affairs of utmost importance received any coverage at that time (Rauner, 1998).

The world had another push for citizenship education in the 1960s, as more public engagement efforts started emerging from UNICEF, the UN, and other similar organizations (Rauner, 1998). Different movements started evolving, such as a movement for peace education, where the United States and the UK were supporting anti-war and anti-nuclear efforts around the world (Rauner, 1998).

All these movements became the basis for global citizenship education. In the 1970s and 1980s, researchers and educators started to pay closer attention to international issues. Anderson (1977) and Hanvey (1976) began promoting public

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awareness of various cultures around the world. Anderson (1977) and Hanvey (1976) emphasized the independency of the world and how to accept and promote the diversity within it. These researchers criticized current curriculum for a focus on separating people into *us* and *them*; conversely, researchers began to tie the movements happening around the world with the goals of U.S. global citizenship education. Together, these movements molded notions of civil rights, intercultural understanding, multiculturalism, peace education, and social justice into one complete framework that served as a base for modern global education (Fujikane, 2003).

In the early 1980s, global education gained enough popularity to pique interests of many educational organization leaders (Rauner, 1998). Leaders of the national curriculum started incorporating such words as *global education* and *global citizenship* more often into goals and themes to promote active "learning and problem solving in a fast developing and ever-changing world" (Rauner, 1998, p. 20).

Davies, Harber, and Yamashita (2005) summarized this new wave in U.S. education in the following statement, "it 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'" (p.6). As Biddle (2002) noted, those of the 20th century world saw the worst of two world wars, as well as a Cold War; therefore, countries opened to more interconnectedness and world-awareness in the 21st century.

Globalization

In 1985, the Economist Theodore Levitt used the word *globalization* to define changes in global economy. The term quickly became popular in both political and

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cultural contexts (Stromquist, 2002). Globalization transferred to the educational arena and ignited interests of many theorists and educational practitioners.

Globalization is a continuing process, an action that describes the connectedness of groups around local communities, countries, and continents (Stromquist, 2002). Recently, the world has become more interconnected and interdependent (Friedman, 2007). Over the last three decades, theorists and researchers attempted to define the word globalization in contexts of economic, political, and cultural viewpoints (Stromquist, 2002).

Friedman (2007) described globalization as a process of flattening the world due to the increasing use of technology. Similarly, Gibson-Graham (1996) defined globalization as a "set of processes by which the world is rapidly being integrated into production and financial markets, the internationalization of commodity culture promoted by an increasingly networked global telecommunications system" (p. 121). Other researchers defined globalization as an impact on individual's perspective and his or her worldwide experience. For example, Blackmore (2000) and Kenway and Kelly (2000) agreed that globalization was more of the awareness of new opportunities that arose in this era; its basis derived from cultural ideologies and ways that these ideologies were influenced by modern technology. Global cultural products and popular culture have spread around the world at a fast pace, thereby influencing local and national cultures and raising the question of global citizenship.

Global Citizenship

Researchers agreed that defining global citizenship was a complex and complicated task, and that there were many debates that surrounded best practices in

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citizenship education and a concept of good citizenship in general (Cogan &

Grossman, 2012; Parker, 1996). There is not one universally accepted definition that

offers a clear understanding of what global citizenship entails. For example, Morais

and Ogden (2010) defined global citizenship as a sense of responsibility for other

citizens on the national and international levels and an engagement in behaviors and

actions that benefit citizens. Additionally, Pykett (2009) and Tupper (2009) defined

citizenship as a full immersion within a community that made the cultural differences

between people hard to detect. Moreover, Parekh (2003) defined global citizenship as

one's tendency toward active participation in social, economic, and political issues

that arose in the global arena.

Several descriptors were recognized along with the definition of the Global

Citizenship that included social responsibility, acceptance of global

interconnectedness, and understanding of interrelationships between individuals and

their communities (Andrzejewski & Alessio, 1999; Osler & Vincent, 2002; Torres,

2002). Mitchell and Parker (2008) studied the definition of the global citizen through

continually asking questions and evaluating one's position in one's local, state,

national, and international community. Moreover, Kronfili (2011) stressed the

importance of equipping students with knowledge and skills needed to address the

increasing number of economic, political, and social changes happening in the

national and international arenas. Hanvey (1976) offered five characteristics of global

citizenship: perspective consciousness, state of planet awareness, cross-cultural

awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices.

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Kirkwood (2001) added the following to these characteristics: global history, the role of nongovernmental organization, and study of universal values.

This study was based on the outline of eight dimensions of global citizenship discussed by Merryfield (1997): (a) human beliefs and values; (b) global system; (c) global issues and problems; (d) cross-cultural understanding; (e) awareness of human rights; (f) global history; (g) acquisition of indigenous knowledge; and (h) development of analytical, evaluative, and participative skills. Merryfield grouped these dimensions into four major categories: global issues, human beliefs and values, cross-cultural understanding, and awareness of human rights.

De Ruyter and Spiecker (2008) described the importance of learning and engaging in intercultural practices emphasizing one adopting the values and attitudes of many cultures. Oxley and Morris (2013) confirmed this notion by stating that people had easy access to Internet and modern technology across the world to experience common cultural perspectives, which played a crucial role in global citizenship. Students could use these intercultural perspectives to understand the world around them in a better way, bringing more attention to the role of globalization in education.

Global Education

Kist (2013) used global and international education interchangeably to describe the strategies to gain knowledge of world cultures; understand historical, economic, geographical, cultural, and environmental relationships among regions and people; and examine the nature of cultural differences and national and regional conflicts and problems. Ibrahim (2005) described one of the main goals of global

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education as involving teachers enabling students to learn about their rights and responsibilities to provide them with the skills and knowledge needed to exercise democracy from local to global levels. Kirkwood (2001) added to this definition and stated that these students "possess high-tech skills, broad interdisciplinary knowledge about the contemporary world, and adaptability, flexibility, and world mindedness to participate effectively in the globalized world" (p. 11).

National Council for the Social Studies (2010) supported global education by saying that social studies should include experiences that provided for the study of global connections and interdependence. Leadership encouraged educators to focus on the following questions: (a) How do ideas spread between societies in today's interconnected world, (b) how does this result in change in societies, (c) what are the other consequences of global connections, and (d) how might people in different parts of the world have different perspectives? Additionally, educators who teach these standards encourage student exposure to various media and first-hand experiences to gain awareness of how things that happen in one part of the world impact other parts of the world.

Social studies are not the only subject where educators should incorporate elements of global education. Educators integrating global education into other disciplines are the "key to fostering international education" (Kist, 2013, p. 13). Educators who integrate within multiple domains provide students with learning opportunities for "them to grapple with real-world problems" (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, 2010, p. xi) and prepare them "to be

more productive members of a globally competitive workforce (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, 2010, p. xi).

Interchangeability

Educators, researchers, scholars, and theorists have used several terms interchangeably, such as global education, global citizenship education, world-centered education, global perspectives in education, multicultural education, and international education (Kirkwood, 2001). The *Harvard Educational Review* (as cited in Hayden, 2006) offered the following definition: "International, global, cross-cultural and comparative education are different terms used to describe education which attempts- in greater or lesser degree – to come to grasps with the increasing interdependence that we face and to consider its relationship to learning" (p.5).

Theoretical Perspectives

To foster critical global awareness, the teacher-researcher examined various theoretical perspectives to understand how to teach global education, what kind of an approach to use, and how students would learn under this approach. Having considered several theories of learning in education, the researcher focused on the ones related to her program of study. Constructivism was critical in understanding the theoretical perspectives of this research study, and thus was included in this review of theoretical perspectives.

In this section, the researcher discusses social learning theory, connectivism, and ethnocentrism. Theorists of these concepts embraced some of the key elements of a global education program, such as social interaction and world-wide connection; they addressed an issue of ethnocentrism, which was a form of bias, where people

tended to judge another culture based on their actions that differed from their own beliefs (Union, Green, & Harlin, 2013).

Constructivism. This theory lies in an understanding that people construct, create, and build knowledge, rather than acquire or learn it (Friedman, 2007). By exploring global problems, participating in simulations, and conducting various research, students could build their knowledge of global citizenship and its importance.

Piaget (as cited in Brooks & Brooks, 1993) first formulated constructivism when he argued that each learner was unique with distinct needs and backgrounds. Social constructivists emphasize the importance of each learner to actively participate in the learning process through series of first-hand experiences. Thus, students can form meanings by immersing themselves in cultural elements, such as differing languages or backgrounds. Under this theory, the teacher's role is more of a facilitator than a lecturer, and teachers create curriculum to emphasize hands-on learning as well as problem-solving (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Knowledge is constructed through social interactions and is shared among the community members versus being a stand-alone, individual experience. Friedman (2007) elaborated on the meaning of the constructivism approach for educators in the context of global learning. He defined constructivism as causing drastic changes in educational philosophies, technological integrations, global communications, and learning environments, which would foster students' engagement in real-life experiences.

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Piaget (as cited in Brooks & Brooks, 1993) described constructivism as a "way of explaining how people come to know about their world" (p.26). Erikson and Kohlberg (as cited in Brooks & Brooks, 1993) stated that due to the constructivist learning theory, students developed in psycho-social and moral domains based on the cognitive structures that developed throughout such experiences.

Social learning theory. In 1963, Bandura presented social learning theory, which carried some of the most important values and concepts that correlate with global education. According to Bandura (1963), environment plays a crucial role in the learning process where students learn best by observing behaviors and learning from thus observed consequences. Bandura emphasized the importance of observation and the ability of students to extract information, process it, and make corresponding decisions about the performance of the behavior.

In the global education course, students could apply the social learning theory as the main emphasis was placed on socializing and building connections with classroom worldwide. By talking to students and learning about their values and concepts that might be different, students gained another perspective. They learned to view the world from more than one standpoint.

Connectivism. Considering technological progress in the last two decades, another theory emerged for learning that derived from behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism theories. Downes (2005) introduced and defined the word connective knowledge as an interaction or a knowledge of a connection. He stated that modern technology, in particular networks, influenced these connections the most (Downes, 2005). Siemens (2005b) agrees that every person thus becomes a member of such

networks. In *Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age,* Siemens (2005a) argued that easily accessible information and the speed at which it spread could enable learning to be defined as "actionable knowledge" (Connectivism section, para. 1).

Connectivism was the basis of the global education course that was offered to students as an elective class. They connected with many schools around the world, shared their values, learned new perspectives, and gained deeper understandings of a complex world around them.

Ethnocentrism and global collaboration. According to Union et al. (2013), empirical studies have shown that ethnocentrism has been significantly reduced in the last decade because of learning more about other cultures and erasing national and international borders. Union et al. (2013) defined ethnocentrism as a perception of other cultures based on preconceptions and stated that it was a problem in today's society. Ethnocentrism could create prejudice and stereotypes created by various ethnic groups and backgrounds amongst students. Union et al. (2013) interviewed students from Canada, Korea, Pakistan, Qatar, and the United States as part of their research on reducing ethnocentrism. They concluded that Web 2.0 technologies and global collaboration were successful in fighting against ethnocentrism in cross-cultural learning environments (Union et al., 2013).

Other researchers found similar results. For example, researchers found that global collaborators aimed to improve learning, breakdown classroom walls, and develop culturally aware learners (Coughlin & Kajder, n.d.) In a global collaborative

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classroom, students can connect, collaborate, and create projects with other classrooms around the world.

Framework

Andreotti (2006) argued that the world still had a long way to develop. She emphasized that the current approach of segregating the world between first and third world countries showed that some countries had more power and privilege over others. To break these stereotypes, Andreotti urged the world of education to reconsider this approach by teaching students that all were equal and had a right to influence the world in the same way. According to Andreotti, students should be taught to think critically about the relationships created by exercising power over others to think of alternative ways of creating equal opportunities for all countries of the world.

In 2005, leaders of a diversity, citizenship, and global education consensus panel produced a set of principles to support educators in nurturing effective citizens in a global context (Banks et al., 2005). These principles played a crucial role in research over the past decade and influenced the theoretical framework of this action research study. These principles were used to describe the following concepts: Students should be educated about the diversity in their local, national, and international community and how to accept and promote it; students should know about the interconnectedness and interdependency of citizens in these communities; the focus of the global citizenship education should be on the human rights all over the globe; and students should learn about democracy and be allowed to practice it as one of the outcomes of this pedagogy.

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Principle 1: Accepting and promoting diversity. According to Banks et al. (2005), students should be taught both the diversity and unity of the world around them. While acknowledging internal differences, such as race, ethnicity, religion, and language within a community, students should learn to see these unique characteristics unite cultures, which unite the world (Banks et al., 2005).

Shultz, Barr, and Selman (2001) conducted a study of 346 eighth grade students in 14 school districts. The treatment group of the study was exposed to *Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO)* curriculum, with teachers who educated students about historical events that jeopardized unity across the world. The researchers concluded, "FHAO students showed increased relationship maturity and decreased fighting behaviour, racist attitudes and insular ethnic identity relative to comparison students" (Shultz et al., 2001, p. 23).

Principle 2: Interdependence of communities. According to Banks et al. (2005), students should also be taught that to become active citizens in a multicultural democracy, they must understand that the world was extremely interconnected and interdependent. Banks et al. emphasized the students' need to know that they were part of a larger community, their community was a part of their nation, and these nations made up their world. Regions are influenced by people, organizations, and events, and cultures do not function as isolated entities; conversely, countries flourish as leadership's wellbeing are influenced by citizens all over the world (Banks, 2001; Osler & Starkey, 2003).

Merryfield and Kasai (2004) urged teachers to show students how the communities were connected and united for a long time now. Researchers referenced,

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"The Zulus in twentieth century South Africa and the Cherokees in nineteenth century Oklahoma… expulsions of Jews in Spain in the late fifteenth century… and… Indians in Peru and Mexico today" (Sklarwitz, 2015, p. 18). Merryfield (1998) stated that students learned from their own experiences, which made interdependency more relevant to them. Moreover, Seider (2012) conducted a study of an urban high school where students participated in a seminar that emphasized how consumer choices influenced people around the world. At the conclusion of the study, students reported better understanding of the implications of such choices, where production was directly linked to multiple nations (Seider, 2012).

Principle 3. Focus on the human rights. Arguably, one of the most important principles of this framework was the human rights principle. Researchers and organization leaders attempted to define human rights education, and they agreed that human rights concerned an "understanding of knowledge of rights and responsibilities, forms of injustice, the history of movements to fight inequality, and international treaties on human rights" (Sklarwitz, 2015, p. 19). Researchers agreed that the understanding of human rights involved a foundation of global interconnectedness; through these lessons, students could learn to appreciate all people of the world collectively, as opposed to individual citizens from specific nations or regions of the world (Ramirez, Suarez, & Meyer, 2006; Takkac & Akdemir, 2012).

McIntosh (2001) studied the effects of the Model United Nations program on secondary students who gained new perspectives on international cultures and issues as a part of their delegations. McIntosh reported that students could relate these issues

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to their own lives, which motivated them to look deeper into their roles of being global citizens. They felt encouraged to look further into careers in international studies (McIntosh, 2001).

Principle 4. Practicing democracy. The best setting for students to practice democracy is in the classroom where they can learn about social issues and begin to form their independent thoughts on the matter (Ochoa & Ochoa, 2007; Parker, 2002). Hess (2009) conducted a series of case studies that measured effects of discussions in the classroom settings on students' future participation in local, national, and international matters. She concluded that students felt more empowered when allowed to express their opinions and hold debates with classmates, as well as other teachers. She also stated that such discussions and debates in the classrooms were rare opportunities because practicing democracy remained rare for students in public school settings (Hess, 2009).

The four principles above made up a framework for this research study. As students were introduced to the unit of global education, they learned about unity and diversity, interconnectedness, and human rights. There were provided the opportunities to practice democracy. They examined and explored several types of global connections, as well as basic issues and concerns. Thus, they developed responsive action plans, such as becoming e-pals with a class in another part of the world. They also initiated analyses of the consequences of interactions among states, nations, and world regions, as they respond to global events and changes (see National Council for the Social Studies, 2010).

Several researchers supported the idea of importance of global education in developing globally-aware students. For example, Boix-Mansilla and Jackson (2011) described an eighth-grade class that learned about food crisis in various parts of the world. Students applied the knowledge that they obtained through analyzing digital stories to a project that resulted in an edible garden at their school. By collaborating with other cultures, students gained different perspectives and became more aware of their responsibilities as global citizens.

Researchers have attempted to measure students' beliefs and attitudes toward global education for decades. Some early research by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) measured students' levels of engagement and attitudes toward global citizenship. The first assessment took place in 1971 and indicated that 14-year-olds in the United States showed one of the lowest levels of global awareness compared to same age students in eight other countries (Torney-Purta & Barber, 2011).

In 1995 to 1999, the second assessment took place; researchers studied 90,000 students in 28 countries this time (McAvoy & Hess, 2013). The third study concluded in 2009, and the results from both assessments played a key role in understanding global citizenship and the critical impact it had on middle school students across the globe (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001).

Researchers have utilized and developed many ways to measure such beliefs and attitudes. Morais and Ogden (2010) constructed a scale used to measure citizenship in a survey based on Likert-scale questions. Bennett (1993) designed an Intercultural Development Inventory to measure the intercultural competency

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development. Similarly, Hunter, White, and Godbey (2006) created the Global

Competence Aptitude Assessment to measure skills, beliefs, and attitudes of being a

global citizen. Benitez (2011) utilized pre and posttreatments to measure students'

global sensitivity and found that global approach helped students become more

accepting of distinct types of government, more multicultural, and understand

problems better on a global scale.

By using numerous interviews and observations, Davies et al.(2005) studied

what students knew and wanted to know about global citizenship and the world

around them. Davies et al. (2005) found that students had a vast interest in the global

topics, particularly in human rights and social justice. Moreover, the researchers

found students almost unanimously described themselves as global citizens, while

having complex notions of what it was (Davies et al., 2005).

Conclusion

Chapter 2 discussed the connection and importance of globalization in

education by comparing theoretical perspectives that this research is based on.

Friedman (2007) elaborated on the meaning of the constructivism approach for

educators in the context of global learning. He defined constructivism as causing

drastic changes in educational philosophies, technological integrations, global

communications, and learning environments, which would foster students'

engagement in real-life experiences.

Bandura (1963) stated that environment played a crucial role in the learning

process where students learned best by observing behaviors, thus connecting social

learning theory with global education. Downes (2005) introduced and defined the

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word connective knowledge, while Siemens (2005b) agreed that every person thus became a member of such networks or global communities. Union et al. (2013) stated that ethnocentrism created a problem in today's society because it could create prejudice and stereotypes based on various ethnic groups and backgrounds among students. Finally, Coughlin and Kajder (n.d.) concluded that leadership of global collaboration aimed to improve learning, breakdown classroom walls, and develop culturally aware learners. This chapter covered historical perspectives that defined global education and allowed the teacher-researcher to understand and describe the importance of conducted research.

One of the essential documents, a *Universal Declaration*, became the foundation of global education known now (UN General Assembly, 1948). Similarly, the passing of Fulbright Act in 1946 became a turnaround point in the history of global education in the United States (Johnson & Colligan, 1965). Leadership created the act to support university students in various countries around the world in their educational endeavors, thereby reflecting William Fulbright's (1966) belief in the power of international exchange of cultural and political values and viewpoints.

In the early 1980s, global education gained enough popularity to pique interests of many educational organizations (Rauner, 1998). Leadership of the national curriculum started incorporating such words as *global education* and *global citizenship* more often into its goals and themes. Leadership wanted to promote active "learning and problem solving in a fast developing and ever-changing world" (Rauner, 1998, p. 20).

This chapter analyzed the literature and current research to show how important it was for students to understand what it meant to be global citizens. Researchers offered useful insights into the effectiveness of global education in the middle school setting. They provided an overview of the types of programs and methods utilized to measure the effectiveness. This literature review showed that leadership of global education programs could help students become more globally-aware citizens; however, more research must be conducted in this area to understand effectively how such global education programs could influence students' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology of this research study. Chapter 3 describes effective data collection techniques, as well as detailed analysis. The goal is to understand how global education influences middle school students at a public school in a southeastern state.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Problem of Practice (PoP)

Over the past few years of teaching at a school district in a southeastern state, the researcher noticed that her students had become increasingly interested in various global topics. Students wanted to talk about world events and cultures around the world. Yet, when they were asked more specific questions about global citizenship, students had a limited understanding of their own roles as world citizens. There seemed both an interest and a need to develop a global education program; therefore, the researcher decided to introduce one at her school.

In August 2017, leadership at East Bridge Middle School started offering an elective that incorporated components of global education and global citizenship to increase a global awareness level of eighth graders at the school. Goodson (2005) stated that those initiating a global education program recognized that the world had become smaller, and they offered more possibilities of inclusiveness toward all cultures. Many students expressed eagerness to learn more about global topics, and they expressed excitement about the opportunity of connecting with schools in different countries. Students could use this opportunity helps students to reflect not only on their own viewpoints but also on the importance of understanding other people.

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Research Question

What impact will a global education program have on the critical global awareness level of eighth-grade students at East Bridge Middle School?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of global education program on the critical global awareness levels of eighth grade students at East Bridge Middle School. Based on Harvey (1976), Israel (2002), Pike and Selby (1988), Stromquist (2002), and Tye (2003), increased critical awareness was defined by students' abilities to identify with being part of an emerging world community to contribute to building their communities' values and practices. Through learning about citizenship and increasing their global awareness levels, students became more aware of diverse cultures, the need to accept such diversity, and the ways to promote it within their community. They could better define their roles as local and global citizens and the actions they need to take to model and encourage others to learn about global citizenship. Finally, they become problem-solvers using critical thinking and decision-making skills, as well as through communicating well with others.

Setting and Timeframe of Study

The study took place at East Bridge Middle School in a southeastern state. East Bridge was one of six middle schools in the district and served a little over 1,000 students in Grades 6 through 8. The school was located close to a military base, as well as a few international manufacturing plants. Thus, leadership at East Bridge hosted several transient students each year, whose families often moved locally, nationally, and internationally.

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According to 2010 U.S. Census data, the racial makeup of the city of East Bridge was 48.1% (51,686) White, 47.9% (51,471) Black or African American, 0.5% (537) Native American, 1.4% (1,504) Asian, 0.1% (107) Pacific Islander, and 1.9% (2,042) from two or more races. Hispanics or Latinos of any race were 4.1% (4,406) of the population.

Leaders of the East Bridge School District enrolled more than 17,000 students in Grades PreK through 12 and employed over 3,000 staff members (U.S Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences [IES], 2018). The district encompassed 16 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 alternative learning program, 1 adult education program, the East Bridge County Career Center, and the Early Head Start program. The International Baccalaureate Diploma and Middle Years programs were available at East Bridge High School and East Bridge Middle School, respectively. All the district's schools were accredited by AdvancED and the State Department of Education. Leaders of East Bridge School District ensured a high-quality educational program that addressed the rigorous academic standards adopted by the southeastern state's Board of Education. All school leaders worked collaboratively to ensure that students are college and career ready.

Students at East Bridge Middle School might schedule a variety of courses, in addition to the required subject area courses of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Electives were offered in numerous STEM classes. East Bridge Middle School was the only school in the district with leaders who offered a global education elective to their students.

The student-participants were selected from a population of eighth graders who took global education electives in the spring of 2018. Students met every other day because the school leadership used an A-B schedule, and the class was scheduled on a B-Day. They met on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays on odd weeks, and Tuesdays and Thursdays on even weeks. The meetings took place from 11:15 to 12:45 in the afternoon. The research started on April13th and ended on June 7th.

As previously stated, this research was based on a set of principles that one could use to support educators in nurturing effective citizens in a global context. At a Diversity, Citizenship, and Global Education Consensus in 2005, a panel of experts in the field of global education produced these principles (Banks et al., 2005). These four principles became the framework of an 8-week long study, where each principle was introduced bi-weekly.

Participants

Eight participants were selected among 25 students enrolled in global education elective at East Bridge Middle School. Parental consent forms (Appendix A) were sent home to gain parents' permissions for students to participate in this action research. To protect the identities of the participants and setting, pseudonyms were used throughout the study. There were three female Caucasian students, two female African-American students, and three African-American male students. Each student's brief description is provided below.

Anna. Anna was 13-years-old. She was a Caucasian female who had an older step-sister and two younger brothers. Anna was an energetic and self-motivated girl. She was an A-B honor roll student. This year was Anna's second year at East Bridge

Middle School. According to her beginning of the year interest survey, Anna enjoyed spending time with her friends and playing outside. She was a kinesthetic learner and loved hands-on activities.

Beth. Beth was 14-years-old. She was a Caucasian female who had two older siblings. Beth lived with her mother and her grandparents. She was a noticeably quiet student, who took her work seriously and applied herself in every subject. Beth struggled with math but had As and Bs in all other subjects. Beth attended East Bridge Elementary School, and this was her third year at East Bridge Middle School. According to her beginning of the year interest survey, Beth enjoyed reading science-fiction books, drawing, and watching TV. She was a visual learner and loved baking with her grandmother.

Carla. Carla was 14-years-old. She was a Caucasian female and did not have any siblings. Carla's father was in the military. This was Carla's first year in East Bridge city. Her family lived in two countries and three different states prior to moving to this southeastern state. Carla was a very well-behaved student and made straight As. According to her beginning of the year interest survey, Carla liked watching anime in Japanese (even though she did not understand most of it) and playing soccer with her dad when he was home. She was a kinesthetic learner and loved her former school in Germany the most.

Dana. Dana was 14-years-old. She was an African-American female who had one younger sibling. Dana was very artistic and liked to express herself creatively. She did not like any core subjects but enjoyed drama and art the most. This was Dana's third year at East Bridge Middle School. According to her beginning of the

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year interest survey, Dana enjoyed drawing and reading comic books. She was a visual learner and loved activities that involved creativity.

Erica. Erica was 13-years-old. She was an African-American female who had an older sister and three younger brothers. Erica had been diagnosed with dyslexia when she was in the fourth grade. She was significantly below her grade level in reading and language arts but at the grade level in math, according to her MAP scores. Erica was a quiet girl who liked working by herself. She received additional help in her resource class every other day. This was Erica's third year at East Bridge Middle School. According to her beginning of the year interest survey, Erica enjoyed spending time with her friends and playing outside. She was a kinesthetic learner and loved building puzzles.

Frank. Frank was 14-years-old. He was an African-American male and did not have any siblings. Frank was an athlete who played on football, basketball, and track teams at East Bridge Middle School, as well as on a baseball team outside of school. Frank was an A-B honor roll student. He attended an elementary school in a neighboring county. This was Frank's third year at East Bridge Middle School. According to his beginning of the year interest survey, Frank enjoyed playing sports and running. He was a kinesthetic learner and loved being a part of the winning team.

Greg. Greg was 14-years-old. He was an African-American male and had two older sisters and one younger sister. Greg was on the East Bridge Middle School football team. His grades ranged from C-average to A-average. Greg moved to this southeastern state at the end of his seventh grade. According to his beginning of the

year interest survey, Greg enjoyed playing video games, watching TV, and listening to music. He was a kinesthetic learner and loved when he could play games at school.

Henry. Henry was 13-years-old. He was an African-American male and had one younger brother. Henry did not play sports at school. His grades ranged from mostly high Cs to low As. Henry enjoyed building structures and was a member of an engineering club. This was Henry's first year at East Bridge Middle School. He lived in Mississippi prior. According to his beginning of the year interest survey, Henry enjoyed playing with Legos and learning about bridges. He was a kinesthetic learner and loves when he was challenged at school.

Research Methods

Students completed a value and attitudes survey that served as a pretest as well as a posttest in this study. The researcher used observation field notes and student journal entries to analyze students' attitudes toward global topics discussed in class. Informal interviews provided additional information to help monitor students' growth and changes in attitudes. Data were collected on a regular basis in a systematic and organized manner. These were then used to determine what impact, if any, a global education program had on the critical global awareness level of eighth-grade students at East Bridge Middle School.

This researcher used a self-report method in which student-participants received a survey instrument asking them specific questions and requesting their personal perspectives on the topic. In general, researchers use self-report methods, such as interviews and questionnaires, to ask individuals for information directly (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliot, 2002).

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East Bridge School District was one of many school districts in this southeastern state that participated in one-to-one initiative which provided students with a 24-hour access to computers. As a result, all assignments were provided to and collected from students electronically. The survey for this study was submitted to student-participants through Google docs, and results were immediately available to the researcher.

Pre and posttest. Global Education Values and Attitudes Survey served as a pre and posttest for this study. The questions were based on Bamber, Bullivant, and Stead's (2013) *Measuring Attitudes Towards Global Learning* survey instrument, as well as on the *Best Practices of Global Education* (Hanover Research, 2015). This survey was made up of 20 questions to determine students' attitudes and beliefs in the following four categories: accepting and promoting diversity, understanding of interdependence of the communities, focusing on human rights, and practicing democracy. The same survey was administered at the end of the study to determine what changes, if any, occurred in students' perceptions of global education topics.

Student journal entries. At the end of each unit, students were asked to respond to a written prompt that corresponded to that unit's topic. Prompts were open-ended and encouraged students to express their thinking in several ways. The goal of these prompts was to see if students grasped the main idea of discussions, promote students' self-reflection, and help students develop an open mindset in various global education topics. Some prompts involved real-life scenarios that asked students to make choices based on what they learned in that unit. Finally, some

prompts required students to put themselves in others' situations and reflect through a distinct perspective.

Informal interviews. The researcher conducted brief informal interviews at the end of each unit. Students were asked to reflect on that unit's topic. The researcher asked students open-ended questions and encouraged them to make statements to express their position on a certain topic. A part of interviews asked students to think critically about what they learned and make a list of questions that they would want to investigate further. Throughout the study, the researcher acknowledged some questions and tied these in with other topics, thus bringing students' attention to how interconnected global education is. Some interview questions also focused on students' perceptions toward the topics studied. These were asked to describe their feelings, as well as justify and support their answers.

The observation field notes. During the study, the researcher took field notes summarizing informal observations occurring at the time of class meetings by physically writing down exactly what the students were saying or doing. The researcher also recorded reflections that were later used when describing the findings from the data analysis. The purpose of field notes was to reflect on what was happening in the classroom, record students' behaviors, and keep track of students' questions and responses during class discussions. The goal of reflection was to allow the researcher to evaluate students' understandings and the depth of their critical thinking about global education topics. The researcher also completed reflective summaries at the end of each unit, noting students' common points of discussions and

any patterns or themes that were found in students' journal entries for the corresponding unit.

Procedure

The 8-week research was divided into four 2-week units corresponding to four principles that made up the framework of this study: accepting and promoting diversity, interdependence of the communities, focus on the human rights, and practicing democracy. During the first unit, students discussed the diversity and the unity of the world around them. They were encouraged to learn to see the unique characteristics that unite cultures around the world, while acknowledging the internal differences, such as race, ethnicity, religion, and language. In the second unit, students focused on understanding that the world is extremely interconnected and interdependent. They discussed the importance of being active citizens in a multicultural democracy, and what it looks like in real world. During the third unit, students talked about arguably one of the most important principles: human rights. Discussion involved understanding of knowledge of rights and responsibilities, forms of injustice, the history of movements to fight inequality, and international treaties on human rights. The key idea of this unit was an understanding that human rights were a foundation of global interconnectedness. Students were encouraged to learn to appreciate all people of the world collectively, as opposed to individual citizens from specific nations or regions of the world.

In the last unit, students had a chance to practice democracy in the classroom where they learned about social issues and began to form their independent thoughts on the matter. Students were encouraged to express their opinions and hold debates

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with classmates, as well as other teachers. Such discussions and debates in the classrooms gave students an opportunity for practicing democracy and allowed them to experience the effects of hearing other people's opinions, as well as sharing their own with others.

At the end of each unit, students completed brief journal entries and reflected on the topic covered in that unit. The researcher conducted informal interviews at the end of each unit, took field notes throughout the study, and used the same value and attitudes survey as a posttest at the end of research.

Data Analysis

Noble and Smith (2014) stated, "Qualitative research is a generic term that refers to a group of methods, and ways of collecting and analyzing data that are interpretative or explanatory in nature and focus on meaning" (p.2). The researcher's job was to collect data to describe, explore, and understand these data from the perspective of the individual or group. When analyzing data, qualitative researchers focus on working with text by transcribing their data in entirety or by focusing on selected sections. The challenge that qualitative researchers face is to create a "cohesive representation of the data" (Noble & Smith, 2014, p.2), while making sense of complex issues and diverse viewpoints. The process of data analysis was to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion, in a way that was transparent, rigorous, and thorough, while remaining "true" to participants' accounts.

Some reasons why the researcher focused on qualitative data analysis included identifying any significant changes in students' beliefs and attitudes that the global

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education program might have contributed to, "whether directly or indirectly, expected or unexpected, positive or negative" (Lennie, Tacchi, Koirala, Wilmore, & Skuse, 2011), and sharing with the community the influences of the program on its participants. The researcher also focused on identifying the ways the global education program could be improved or changed to meet East Bridge Middle School students' expectations better and to understand the culture, experiences, and activities better of diverse student population in the context of their lives.

This researcher analyzed student journal entries, field notes, and interview notes on a weekly basis. All information was carefully transcribed and subsequently coded by using abbreviations, as well as color coding. The researcher put a system in place that helped to understand the impacts of the program on the participants better. Data were collected and organized at a particular time each week and were readily available to use to identify, compare, and assess student changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

The researcher used the 12 steps of qualitative data analysis to organize and manage data (Lennie et al., 2011). First, accurate data were recorded. The researcher kept clear and detailed record of all data collected in the form of detailed notes and transcripts. Then, the researcher labeled and archived all data. Thorough organization made the information easily accessible for the data analysis later in the process. The researcher set a database to help easily find data, using the Excel program on her personal computer. Names, locations, dates, and methods were thoroughly documented.

In the next step, the researcher set up four categories that corresponded to the four principles or units that framed this study. Once the categories were created, the process of filing began. Next, the researcher focused on the demographic data collected as a part of the pretest. This information helped the analysis and interpretation of the data and was later included in the evaluation report.

In the next step, the researcher carefully read the data and began coding all field notes, interview transcripts, and journal entries. She used colored pens and post-it notes to code different ideas or themes in the hard-copy data. She also used word-processing highlighting program with the data collected electronically.

Next, the researcher focused on interpreting and summarizing the findings by attempting to put the data into perspective. The researcher used triangulation by combining various methods and with diverse types of data sources to cross-reference the results of the study. She compared themes in field notes with themes in interviews and journals, noting any changes over time. Then, the researcher made conclusions and recommendations and focused on drafting the report.

In the next step, the researcher critically reviewed the initial analysis, recommendations, and conclusions. The purpose of such cross-checking was to draw valid conclusions about the research findings. The researcher further shared the findings with research stakeholders.

At this stage, the researcher analyzed how the findings could best be used, how students could benefit from these data, and how this research could be used to identify other issues that correlated with this study. During this step, the researchers identified the global education program weaknesses and strengths.

During the last step, the researcher implemented recommendations and identified if follow-up research was needed. Throughout the entire data analysis process, the researcher regularly reviewed if this organization system was working well and if it was effective for the purpose of this study. The researcher was satisfied with the chosen method of qualitative data analysis, as it made it possible to describe direct and indirect, expected, and unexpected effects of the global education program in detail.

Plan for Reflecting with Participants on Data

Throughout the study, the researcher continuously reflected with students individually and as a group. The reflections occurred in verbal discussions and interviews, as well as in written communication. Through data analysis, the researcher gave students early feedback and encouraged them to think critically about global education issues. Students were given many opportunities to self-reflect and to think deeply about the topics discussed in each unit.

At the end of each unit, the researcher met with eight participants to discuss what stood out for them in that unit. The group reflected on not only the effects that the issues had on people in general but also on the impact that participants experienced themselves.

Participants must have an opportunity to share their reflections with their family and friends. Whether the impact was major or minor, they all felt excited to talk the classroom debates with their parents and relatives. This aspect made the research even more significant and valuable for the participants.

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Plan for Devising an Action Plan

      This action research was conducted in a classroom setting by a regular education teacher. The action plan was devised by the researcher and based on the data analysis, the findings of the study, and the implications of the impact of the global education program on the critical global awareness level of eighth grade students at East Bridge Middle School.

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Chapter 4: Findings from the Data Analysis

Problem of Practice (PoP)

Over the past few years of teaching at a school district in a southeastern state, the researcher noticed that her students had become increasingly interested in various global topics. Students wanted to talk about world events and cultures around the world. Yet, when they were asked more specific questions about global citizenship, students had a limited understanding of their own roles as world citizens. There seemed both an interest and a need to develop a global education program; therefore, the researcher decided to introduce one at her school.

In August 2017, leadership at East Bridge Middle School started offering an elective that incorporated components of global education and global citizenship to increase a global awareness level of eighth graders at the school. Goodson (2005) stated that those initiating a global education program recognized that the world had become smaller, and they offered more possibilities of inclusiveness toward all cultures. Many students expressed eagerness to learn more about global topics, and they expressed excitement about the opportunity of connecting with schools in different countries. Students could use this opportunity helps students to reflect not only on their own viewpoints but also on the importance of understanding other people.

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Research Question

What impact will a global education program have on the critical global awareness level of eighth-grade students at East Bridge Middle School?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of global education program on the critical global awareness levels of eighth grade students at East Bridge Middle School. Based on Harvey (1976), Israel (2002), Pike and Selby (1988), Stromquist (2002), and Tye (2003), increased critical awareness was defined by students' abilities to identify with being part of an emerging world community to contribute to building their communities' values and practices. Through learning about citizenship and increasing their global awareness levels, students became more aware of diverse cultures, the need to accept such diversity, and the ways to promote it within their community. They could better define their roles as local and global citizens and the actions they need to take to model and encourage others to learn about global citizenship. Finally, they become problem-solvers using critical thinking and decision-making skills, as well as through communicating well with others.

Findings of the Study

The following is a thorough descriptive analysis of the results of this study that was based on the following four principles: accepting and promoting diversity, interdependence of the communities, focus on the human rights, and practicing democracy. A Diversity, Citizenship, and Global Education Consensus panel in 2005 produced the set of principles to support educators in nurturing effective citizens in a global context (Banks et al., 2005).

The researcher considered all data for each participant individually. The pre and post-assessments were analyzed quantitatively using a Likert-scale. Questions on the pre and posttest were grouped into four groups corresponding to four principles. Each group consisted of five questions that measured participants' values and attitudes toward a particular principle using a Likert-scale. Participants' scores varied from *5 (lowest possible)* to *20 (highest possible)* for each principle.

The interviews, student journals, and field notes were analyzed qualitatively. The researcher noted students' use of reflections when discussing a particular topic and the change in participants' attitudes, values, and beliefs. The commonalities and differences among the topics are discussed in the interpretations of results section of this chapter. Below is the analysis of each participant's data followed by an interpretive synthesis of the study.

Principle 1. Accepting and promoting the diversity. Anna scored 3 points on four out of five questions and 5 points on the fifth question. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 16 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). Anna scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: I do not have to learn to respect other people's cultural differences to be a global citizen. She marked strongly disagree. She also marked "no" on whether she had visited other countries.

Anna's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting the diversity showed that she valued and understood the diversity "much better thanks to the activities we conducted in class." It was important for Anna to see that "being an active citizen meant to understand and appreciate different cultures." In her journal,

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Anna opened up about "not really knowing much about diversity" and "taking things for granted."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher followed up with Anna on her initial response to a question on the pretest about not having to learn to respect other people's cultural differences to be a global citizen. Anna shared how in her family they "did not have a lot of diversity," but she "knew how important it was because of the other kids at school." The researcher's field notes revealed more evidence about Anna's growing mindset. Following an activity that introduced students to a life of a girl from India, Anna referred to that story several times in upcoming weeks. She talked about how much she has learned about the diversity and richness of cultures in the world.

Beth scored 2 points on one out of five questions, 3 points on three questions, and 4 points on the fifth question. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 15 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). Beth scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: understanding the cultures of the world was not always informative and interesting in school. She also marked no on whether she had visited other countries.

Beth's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting diversity showed that her understanding and appreciation of diversity increased due to exposure to "real life stories of families from various backgrounds that we discussed in this class." Beth stated that the "true meaning of citizenship is how a person acts toward those who are different from them" and whether he or she "is willing to accept

these differences." In her journal, Beth mentioned, "Turns out, diversity is beautiful. We learn from other people and take the best from their cultures to make ours better."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Beth to comment on her initial response to a question about understanding the cultures of the world, and it not always being informative and interesting in school. Beth responded that even though the school was so diverse, students rarely talked about diversity. She mentioned how much she enjoyed taking virtual field trips and learning about some cultures in this class because it helped her understand some of her peers better. The field notes also showed that Beth actively contributed to conversations about the benefits of cultural awareness not only in her community but also in the world.

Carla scored 3 points on two out of five questions and 4 points on the remaining three questions. Her pretest score resulted in the highest score of all the participants, a total of 18 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). Carla marked "strongly agree" on several boxes, as well as "yes" on whether she had visited other countries. The two questions she marked "somewhat agree" on were understanding that cultures of the world were not always informative and interesting in school, and she was being prepared to assume a role as a global citizen in the world.

Carla's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting the diversity was characterized by a deep level of reflection. Carla talked about "how small our world is" and how "we are all a part of a family with our differences that we need to celebrate instead of trying to change to be like someone who we are not." Carla embraced this journal prompt by bringing several examples from her own

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experience of when she lived in Germany and China. She talked about how important it was for her to feel accepted in a community where everyone was different from her.

Carla's interview focused around her disagreement with the way that "schools do things in the US." She did not feel that students were taught the importance of being active citizens. In fact, she tried to recall when she was explicitly taught something about it and could not. She mentioned that in Germany and China, they continuously took part in the decisions in their community: "It was like they all listened to us, it felt important. I wanted to do more because I felt important." Carla regrets not having an opportunity like that here in the United States.

Dana scored 2 points on two out of five questions and 3 points on the other three questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 13 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 16 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). Dana did not mark any of the "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" boxes on her pretest. She also marked "no" on whether she had visited other countries.

Dana's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting the diversity was minimal. Dana said, "Differences are important because everyone is different." She talked about her personal experience with being discriminated against and feeling left out, but she did not elaborate on how it made her feel and what impact it had on her. Dana mentioned that she wished she knew more about other cultures because what was talked about in class made her think about it all. She said, "I would want everyone to know these stories and be able to put themselves in other people's shoes."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Dana to talk about what she learned during that unit and how she thought it would influence her in future. Dana admitted than she never thought of other people's perspectives' before. She admitted that it was difficult to agree with everything that was talked about in class; by the end of the second week, she realized that she "did not have to agree with other people to respect their differences." According to researcher's field notes, Dana's participation increased tremendously during this unit. She went from barely participating in discussions to raising her hand every time students were asked to think back and reflect on a question during this unit.

Erica was the only student who marked both the highest and the lowest scores on this section of the pretest. She scored 1 point on two of the questions, 3 points on one of the questions, and 4 points on the two remaining questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 13 points compared to a posttest total of 15 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). She also marked "no" on whether she had visited other countries.

Erica's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting the diversity showed that she appreciated the diversity around her but "doesn't know much about it." Erica talked about several scenarios that was discussed in class and commented that she "did not know that some people have such different views because of their culture." Erica seemed to reflect on her ignorance prior to being in this class. She spoke about not knowing that some things she had done could have offended other cultures, and now that she knew and understood diversity better, she "will do her best to take everyone's opinion into consideration."

During Erica's interview that week, the researcher brought up several statements that the participant marked "strongly agree" on, such as "I do not have to learn to respect other people's cultural differences to be a global citizen," and "understanding the cultures of the world is not always informative and interesting in school." Erica stated right away that her opinion changed and that she thought "that it is very important to learn about and accept other cultures." She mentioned that the story about an immigrant boy from Syria really touched her and changed the way she thought about many things. Erica said that to be a good citizen of a country, one first needed to "be good to everyone else even if they were not born here."

Frank scored 3 points on four out of five questions and 4 points on the fifth question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 16 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). Frank scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: Understanding the cultures of the world is not always informative and interesting in school. He marked a "strongly disagree" box. He also marked "no" on whether he had visited other countries.

Frank's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting the diversity showed that he enjoyed the activities conducted in class during this unit and that he learned "a lot and understood what diversity means much better." He said that he "would want all students at school to have a conversation about what it means to be different and how we can focus on the positives of diversity as opposed to negatives."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher followed up with Frank on his initial response to a question about understanding the cultures of the

world was not always informative and interesting in school. Frank responded by acknowledging that he thought learning about diversity was a waste of time because "we already know everything." He admitted that during the last two weeks, he learned more about diversity than he originally thought. The researcher's field notes also revealed that Frank was actively contributing to all discussions and brought many valid points to the table. Frank asked critical questions and encouraged the group to think about various perspectives on a deeper level. Frank also stayed after class twice to ask some follow-up questions, indicating that he was highly interested in the topic.

Greg scored 2 points on four out of five questions and 3 points on the fifth question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 11 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of ten points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). Greg scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: I do not have to learn to respect other people's cultural differences to be a global citizen. He marked a "strongly disagree" box. He also marked "no" on whether he had visited other countries.

Greg's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting the diversity showed that he realized that diversity was important in general, but he did not agree that people had to respect everyone's differences. Greg insisted that many people did not respect him, and he was "not too upset about it." He stated that if "everyone gets upset because of other people's opinions, then they need to grow up and learn how to do better." Greg's understanding of the concept of diversity seemed superficial and did not exhibit any depth or critical thinking.

During an informal interview that week, the researcher followed up with Greg on his understanding of the definition of diversity. Greg stated that what was talked about in class helped him realize that diversity meant that "we need to take care of each other," but it did not mean people needed to change. He referred to a story of an Indian girl discussed in class and said that he did not see why it was important because "she was the one who needed to change since she was coming to a different culture." The field notes also showed that Greg did not take some of the discussions seriously and made several insensitive jokes. The researcher made a note once that she was curious about what made Greg so hostile toward other cultures at times.

Henry scored 2 points on one out of five questions, 3 points on three questions, and 4 points on the fifth question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 15 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.1). Henry scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: I do not have to learn to respect other people's cultural differences to be a global citizen. He also marked "no" on whether he had visited other countries.

Henry's response to a journal prompt about accepting and promoting the diversity showed that he understood the complex definition of diversity and "realized that it is important to learn about the differences we have in cultures in our communities." Henry also spoke about his own experiences openly and shared how much he enjoyed the activities that helped him "understand that our differences mae[*sic*] the world even more beautiful." In his journal, Henry mentioned a thought that he "would like schools to incorporate more of diversity examples" and educate students about the "power of knowing how to accept each other."

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During an informal interview that week, the researcher followed up with Henry on the idea of schools educating their students about diversity. Henry said that he had that idea while learning about schools around the world. He said that it was important for him to see "the world from different perspectives" and that he wished he learned this earlier. The researcher's field notes also showed that Henry had an idea of creating a video that the class could share with the school because he thought that "what we were learning was important for everyone to know." He actively participated in discussions and contributed several answers and examples from his experiences.

Principle 2. Interdependence of the communities. Anna scored 2 points on three out of five questions and 3 points on the remaining two questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 12 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). Anna also indicated that she mostly read books.

Anna's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities showed Anna learned and opened more to the idea that the world was interconnected, and "interdependence is something we will see more of in the future." Anna stated that being able to contact schools in different countries during this unit helped her "understand that we are closer to each other than we seem." She also wondered if by the time she graduated college, she would "have an opportunity to work for a company world-wide." She stated that this unit's activities made her understand that she had a "chance of working anywhere she wanted when she grows up" and that "is something amazing."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Anna to comment on her what she thought needed to be done at schools to teach interconnectedness. Anna stated that she was fascinated with the opportunities that they were given in just 2short weeks. She said that looking at various careers that involved global knowledge and understanding motivated her to "do more research to find out what else is needed to be employed at a global company." The researcher's field notes showed that Anna's interest in global relations sparked during those 2 weeks. She met with the researcher twice after class to ask questions about the opportunities she could have in the future.

Beth scored 2 points on four out of five questions and 3 points on the fifth question. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 11 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 11 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). Beth scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: Being globally interconnected means I have to learn responsibility to others in the world. Beth indicated that she mostly read books.

Beth's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities revealed that Beth "did not understand the meaning of the word interdependence at first." She admitted that she was confused about the concept because she "thought that we did not necessarily need to rely on each other to be successful." She wondered if it was important to support one's community more than "trying to focus on a bigger picture and not succeeding at all." Beth also ended her journal prompt asking the researcher to clarify what the prompt was about.

During an interview that week, the researcher and Beth engaged in a dialogue discussing that unit's prompt and Beth's response. The researcher started by restating the prompt in her own words and asking if Beth could think of an example of interconnectedness that was discussed in that unit. She said that the only thing that came to her mind was the virtual field trips that they participated in that showed different global career paths. She then stated that "maybe having a global career means that you support interconnectedness." The researcher's field notes confirmed that Beth's responses during discussions were somewhat off-topic and that she might not have fully grasped the concept. One of the notes said that she looked confused and withdrawn at times.

Carla scored 3 points on one out of five questions and 4 points on the remaining four questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 19 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). This score was the highest score any of the participants obtained on any of the pretest topics.

Carla's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities reflected Carla's strong standpoint on the topic. She argued several valid points of the importance of educating students on the effects of interconnectedness on our future. She gave several examples from her experience attending schools in other countries and compared her "parents' work experience to the opportunities that most of American students consider." Carla said that she planned to work for a global company because these were becoming "increasingly popular."

During an interview that week, the researcher and Carla discussed her career plans. Carla shared that she had many friends in other countries whom she contacted every day through various means of technology. She described how easy it was to stay in touch and how "powerful this connection is." She mentioned that she had always been interested in having a job that would open all corners of the world to her and that this week's unit confirmed this passion of hers even more. Carla seemed highly enthusiastic about her future career opportunities. The researcher noted that Carla was completely immersed in the virtual field trips that discussed global careers, and her enthusiasm was contagious for several other students. Carla wrote in her journal that she felt "lucky to to[*sic*] live in this day and age with so many great career opportunities."

Dana scored 1 point on two out of five questions, 2 points on two more questions, and 3 points on the remaining two questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 12 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 14 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). Dana also indicated on her survey that she mostly read internet, and other, although she was instructed to choose only one answer.

Dana's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities showed that she felt it was important "to be interdependent but not too much." She did not elaborate on her answer. She used one of the videos shown in class as an example and talked about the fact that having a global career makes one very "independent, which is a great thing."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Dana what interdependence meant to her. Dana's first answer was vague, indicating that she did

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not understand the question that was being asked. After a brief discussion about what was done in class during this unit, the researcher restated the initial question. Dana sounded more confident this time and quickly responded that interdependence was "the power the people had to rely on each other like in the career video we watched." She referred to the fact that the more technology was created, the better connected people become with each other. During this conversation, Dana seemed to have come to a realization that interdependence means "to be responsible for others in the world because of how much they may be affected by what we do." The researcher's field notes also showed that Dana's responses during this unit's discussions were vague. She was not active during this unit.

Erica scored 1 point on two out of five questions and 2 points on the remaining three questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 8 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 12 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). Erica also indicated on her survey that she mostly read on the Internet.

Erica's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities showed that she considered it an important aspect of global citizenship. Erica described interdependence as "a relationship in which people grow together by helping each other and taking care of each other." Erica used several examples from class to support her statement. She mentioned that one thing that "all careers we looked at this week had in common was that they were all interrelated and engaging."

During an interview that week, the researcher followed up with Erica on her definition of the word "interrelated" that she used in answering her journal prompt. Erica referred to several videos watched in class about the importance of working

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together and being able to build partnerships. She said that she did not know what this word meant prior to discussions this week. Erica said that she learned interrelated meant "being able to depend on others far away to do something successful." The researcher's field notes showed that Erica was more engaged in this unit's discussions than she was last week. She also volunteered several responses during reflections and contributed two thought-provoking questions during the whole-group meeting. At the end of the interview, Erica admitted that she "had fun this week and learned interesting things" she did not know. She said that she was now interested in looking more into the interconnected world.

Frank scored 2 points on one out of five questions, 3 points on three questions, and 4 points on the remaining question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 14 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). Frank also indicated on his survey that he mostly read on the Internet.

Frank's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities revealed that he understood the concept well and considered it highly important to "carry responsibility to others in the world." Frank's interest in this topic came up in several places in his writing. He mentioned that he found it "fascinating how close our world really is, and how easy it is to connect with people all around the world."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher spoke to Frank about his newly sparked interest and how it could influence his future career. He hesitated, at first saying that he saw him being a professional athlete and that it did not "think it

would affect him much." After a brief discussion however, Frank admitted that being "a professional athlete makes you travel the world too." He concluded by saying that he would need to know how to communicate to people from diverse cultures and he would need to depend on them at all times if he was in a different part of the world. The researcher's field notes showed that Frank was more active during this week's discussions. He seemed interested in this unit. The researcher noted that the first story in this unit talked about a Portuguese boy who liked playing soccer and grew up as a computer engineer working for a global company. This story hooked Frank from the beginning, and he seemed to relate to that boy a lot.

Greg scored 2 points on two out of five questions, 3 points on two more questions, and 4 points on the remaining question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 14 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 17 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). Greg also indicated on his survey that he mostly read internet.

Greg's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities showed little interest in the unit. Greg's response was mostly off-topic and had little depth to it. He said that he thought "interdependence was important because it was people needed it." He also marked that "being a citizen means being interdependent because of protecting the country."

During an interview that week, the researcher and Greg discussed one thing that stood out to him the most in this unit. Greg did not seem focused during this interview. The researcher marked in her field notes that she was unsure if Greg was taking this experience seriously. Most of Greg's answers were two to three words and

did not highlight his personal feelings or reflections. When asked to elaborate, Greg responded with "I don't know."

Later in the study, the researcher revisited this theme with Greg; at that time, he could define interdependence as "being dependent on other people and helping each other out." He could contribute to a debate about citizenship by saying that "we can only be good citizens if we are able to rely on each other. If I want to trust someone, I let them know they can depend on me." Another student supported his answer and used the term "interconnected." Greg finished by saying, "Yes, understanding interconnectedness is also good for citizenship."

Harry scored 1 point on one out of five questions, 2 points on two more questions, and 3 points on the remaining two questions. His pretest score resulted in a total of 11 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.2). Harry also indicated on his survey that he mostly read books.

Harry's response to a journal prompt about the interdependence of the communities showed a deep level of reflection. Harry thought engineering was the "coolest job" and that to become an engineer, he would "need to be interconnected." He later added that it was important to work with individuals from all over the world and produce projects together. Harry stated, "Success would not have been possible if people were not holding themselves responsible for others as well."

During an interview that week, the researcher asked Harry to elaborate on his written response when he said that he needed to be "interconnected." Harry immediately gave an example of having to build a structure remotely and managing a

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team of workers without being able to supervise them directly. Harry said that if it were his job, he "would need to know that they are responsible, and they would need to be able to trust my directions. In a way, we would be connected to each other even if we live on different continents." He added that interconnectedness would also mean keeping his workers safe, knowing what dangers could happen to them, and keeping them away from such dangers. Harry's interview response seemed greatly influenced by one of the videos watched in class about a supervisor managing a team of workers remotely.

Principle 3. Focus on the human rights. Anna scored 4 points on all five of the pretest questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 20 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Anna also indicated that she got current events' news by watching TV.

Anna's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights was vocal. Anna started this unit with an already strong standpoint. In her response, she wrote, "Everyone is born with same rights and it is everyone's responsibility to protect these rights." She criticized people who took advantage of others and said, "It is our duty to bring attention to what is really important, the injustice that is happening across the world." She stated, "When I look at how lucky I am, all I can think of is what impact will I have. I want to do something that will help others and keep them safe."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Anna to think of several ways that she could help around the world. One thing she mentioned was to "help spread the word." Anna agreed that if more attention was brought to the issues

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of human rights, the more people publicized it and made others aware, the better the response would be "and, hopefully, the outcome." Anna participated actively in this unit's discussions and some responses seemed real and valid. During one of the reflections, Anna mentioned that human rights get pushed away often because "some bad people benefit from it," and they pay for the issue to be silenced. "But," she said, "if more people would stand up, then they would not be able to silence the entire populations."

Beth scored 3 points on three of the pretest questions and 4 points on the remaining two questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 17 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Beth also indicated that she got current events' news by watching TV.

Beth's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights showed her strong opinion about protecting everyone's rights. Beth indicated several times that human rights were not protected equally in countries across the world. Then, she focused on a lack of it such protection here in the United States. Beth brought several arguments criticizing those who took this power away from people, saying that "a human right is not a property and people should not have to worry to lose it like it was an object." Beth argued that people did not do nearly enough to bring attention to the topic and that "more needs to be done if we are to call ourselves citizens."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Beth to give an example of what she could do to protect human rights and how that would reflect the concept of being active citizen. Beth said that students could "advocate for others."

She described a scenario in which students could do their part of being active citizens by "learning as much as they can about the issues." She continued by saying that students needed to engage in meaningful discussions both at school and outside of school: "We may not have much power now but when we grow up [*sic*] we can do things to help. To me it is important to start thinking about it now." In her field notes, the researcher noted that Beth really opened during the discussions this week and actively contributed.

Carla scored 4 points on each of the five pretest questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 20 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Carla also indicated that she got current events' news from the Internet.

Carla's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights reflected Carla's strong opinion about it. She spoke harshly about human rights violations around the world and that many people remained ignorant of the problem. Carla was also the only student who acknowledged that people have made much progress in the recent years, and she "felt hopeful that it will continue this way." She praised those who actively fought for human rights and reminded others of the importance of "protecting these rights and respecting each other."

During an interview that week, Carla and the researcher engaged in a discussion about a way that school leaders could bring awareness to the issue of human rights. Carla said that she would love to see some "contests happening at schools where students could research a human right and make a presentation in a creative way." She also spoke about sparking students' interests and engaging them in

learning more about being active citizens. Carla pointed out that it was a collective effort that helped individuals, as well as groups of people. She said that school leaders should start talking about some rights as early as elementary schools to instill good values in young students. The researcher made an observation in her field notes that Carla was passionate about human rights in general and always had a helpful response during some discussions.

Dana scored 1 point of one of the five pretest questions, 2 points on three questions, and 3 points on the remaining one. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 10 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 17 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Dana scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: The social activities in school are getting me ready to become a member of a global society. She marked a "strongly agree" box. She also indicated that she got current events' news from the TV.

Dana's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights showed a somewhat limited understanding of the issue. Dana said that "human rights are important because we all have them." She further elaborated and gave more specific examples all based on the videos watched in class and discussions held as a whole group. Dana did not directly answer a question about a significance of protecting human rights but said it "was important because everyone is doing it."

During an interview that week, Dana was asked to give an example of how she could encourage others to be more aware of the issue. She first stated that others "could watch videos like we did in class," but then added that it would not be meaningful unless they talked about it, as well. Dana also produced an idea of

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choosing one of the human rights and focusing on making others aware of it. She said, "When you try to talk to talk about all issued [*sic*] at the same time, it is just too much, and people would not listen." The researcher's notes indicated that Dana started this unit reluctantly; by the end of it, she was contributing and participating in discussions more actively.

Erica scored 1 point of three out of the five pretest questions, 2 points on one question, and 3 points on the remaining one. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 8 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 11 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Erica scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: I am being prepared to assume my role as a global citizen in the world.She marked a "strongly agree" box. She also indicated that she got current events' news from the TV.

Erica's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights demonstrated her attitude toward the issue. She insisted that it was "very important to know and understand that problems exist and that we need to come up with solutions." She mentioned educating oneself better on the issues and acknowledging the importance of taking care of others. Erica used the word "responsibility" several times throughout her writing, indicating that she made a connection between these two concepts.

During an interview that week, the researcher asked Erica to elaborate on her response to one of the questions on the pretest, which stated that she was being prepared to assume her role as a global citizen in the world. Erica said that she was learning about world in her social studies class and that it was "same as learning how

to be a good citizen." She also referenced her global education class and stated that it was "definitely teaching her about it, especially about rights and how to protect them." In her field notes, the researcher made a comment that Erica was not involved in this unit's discussions. She contributed minimal answers and barely supported her viewpoint with examples.

Frank scored 3 points on four out of the five pretest questions and 4 points on the remaining one. His pretest score resulted in a total of 16 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Frank scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: I am being prepared to assume my role as a global citizen in the world. He marked a "strongly agree" box. He also indicated that he got current events' news from the Internet.

Frank's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights was interesting to read. Frank seemed interested in protecting human rights and what people could do as a society to help. His response included words, such as "responsibility," "duty," "obligation," and "civil rights." Frank had great ideas about promoting human rights movements in high school and increasing students' awareness, so they "could grow up to change the world." Frank concluded by saying he was motivated "to encourage others to learn more about the human rights issues."

During a post-unit interview that week, the researcher asked Frank what stood out the most to him during this week. Frank said that he remembered that "many human rights are not made public and people do not realize what rights they have." The researcher asked Frank about those people who were aware of their rights, but these rights were being taken away from them. Frank's response was that "it was

illegal, and that we need to come together as a big group of people to fight and stop this type of crime." Frank was actively participating in whole group discussions throughout this unit.

Greg scored 1 point on three out of the five pretest questions, 2 points on one of the questions, and 3 points on the remaining question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 8 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 19 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Greg scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: I am being prepared to assume my role as a global citizen in the world. He marked a "strongly agree" box. He also indicated that he got current events' news from the Internet.

Greg's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights demonstrated some understanding of the issue. Greg agreed that human rights issues were far more common than people thought, and it was "important to learn about them in school and out of school." He used examples from several videos that was watched as a part of the unit. Greg really tried to reflect on his perspective on the issue and said what he would do if he could have influenced others to take action. Greg talked of "building organizations" within smaller communities and localizing available resources.

During an interview that week, Greg was asked to explain what he could do as an active citizen to protect human rights. He stated that he "could show videos to his parents and friends." When asked how videos could help, Greg responded that "people would start having conversations about what they see, and asking questions." He said that it would be easier to understand what was going on if people talked about

issues more and discussed these with others. Greg referred to this answer several more times later in his interview.

Henry scored 3 points on four out of the five pretest questions and 4 points on the remaining question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 16 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.3). Henry scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: the social activities in school are getting me ready to become a member of a global society. He marked a "strongly agree" box. He also indicated that he got current events' news from reading magazines.

Henry's response to a journal prompt about the focus on the human rights was well-written and revolved around the issue of educating students in schools, "so that they can take action when they grow up and go to college." He mentioned that the videos discussed in class made him think about his own rights that he was taking for granted. He said that if he "was born in a different country," his rights could have been taken away from him, and "it would have been bad."

During an interview that week, the researcher asked Henry about his journal writing and him mentioning his rights. Henry said that he was "sure many other students do not realize that we have [rights]." They do not learn about human rights, do not respect these rights, and do not know how to protect these rights. Harry said that he would want to be "more responsible and to be able to help others who don't have human rights like me." The researcher noted that Henry was drawn to the human rights topic this week and was eager to talk about some of the solutions students

could enact. He proposed several ideas, including students creating advertisements to bring public attention to the issue.

Principle 4. Practicing democracy. Anna scored 3 points on one of the five of the pretest questions and 4 points on the remaining four questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 19 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Anna also indicated that she did not speak a second language.

Anna's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy revealed that Anna had a strong understanding of this week's topic. She gave many examples of how important it was for citizens to be active in their rights of practicing democracy. She mentioned, "Many students do not understand this concept because they don't want to learn what a democracy is," but "if we all learned a little about it, we would all be better citizens and better served our country."

During an informal interview that week, Anna was asked to name some things that she was already doing as an active citizen. Anna responded with such examples as "helping others," "doing well at school," "participating in community work," and "following the rules in her home, school, city and country." All responses indicated a deeper level of understanding of citizenship. Anna also said that it was "not just one thing that we do every day, like watching a favorite show, but a process of doing something that is right all the time." Anna spoke of such abstract concepts as acting responsible and showing respect. In her field notes, the researcher noted that Anna contributed many answers this week in the class discussions. She had a well-rounded

understanding of the complex notion of democracy, and she enjoyed sharing her thoughts with others.

Beth scored 2 points on two of the five of the pretest questions, 3 points on another two questions, and 4 points on the remaining question. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 14 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Beth also indicated that she did not speak a second language.

Beth's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy showed that she had a good grasp of the concept and understood democracy. Beth also said that she got interested in learning about democracy this week and that it helped her "understand things from a unique perspective, especially what I need to do as an active citizen of my community."

During an interview that week, the researcher asked Beth to give examples of what she would like to do more as a citizen of her local community. Beth's responses varied from community work to doing civil duty to protecting her home. The researcher noted that Beth was more actively engaged in debates this week than she was in all the discussions held in prior weeks. She thrived when she was given a chance to express herself, share her opinions, and voice her concerns.

At the end of the interview, Beth recalled a debate conducted in class about the ways people showed citizenship at school. She said it was her most favorite activity and that she "thoroughly enjoyed it." The researcher then asked why Beth felt that way, and she admitted that during the debate, she felt empowered to speak up in front of everyone. She was not afraid that "someone would judge you because I knew

there were no right or wrong answers." Beth felt that she could express herself freely, and a whole new experience opened to her.

Carla scored 4 points on each of the five questions again. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 20 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Carla also indicated that she spoke a second language.

Carla's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy revealed critical thinking and deep reflections. Carla was not only generally speaking about the subject but also went into deeper discussions with herself about the implications of having a society whose members were active citizens. Carla discussed valid points in her writing and focused on how much communities could be improved "if every citizen was exercising their rights and acting in a way that would benefit others."

During an interview that week, Carla was eager to talk about some positive things she witnessed in various communities. She gave examples from other countries and states. Carla said that the best experience of all she had in Texas, where everyone on base was so respectful that it made her "feel safe and taken care of." She then stated that to her, this was what the community should feel like.

Carla mentioned that it was little things that made the difference in the entire environment. People using manners, people not being afraid to express their opinions knowing they would be respected, those are the things that mattered to Carla. She said that democracy was "much like a choice, where you are the one making decisions. But, for some reason, people forget about what is right and what is wrong, and democracy turns out hurting them more because they choose to do bad things." Carla

said that it was important for people to not forget that their choices influenced other people too.

Dana scored 2 points on two out of the five questions on the pretest, 3 on one of the questions, and 4 on the two remaining questions. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 15 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Dana also indicated that she did not speak a second language.

Dana's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy showed some understanding of the topic. She was comfortable saying that she realized she had not been a good citizen because there were many things that she did not know she could influence. For example, Dana said that she could be a better citizen if she "takes care of the community by not littering or leaving your trash behind." She also stated that she could practice democracy by "learning about what choices I have and making right choices, and not listening to people who don't know what they are talking about."

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Dana why she thought she was being a bad citizen when she wrote her journal response. Dana pointed out that a lot of what was talked about in class during this unit, she had no idea about. She said it was "not like someone talked to me and told me I have to be a good citizen, and I have to do this and that." The researcher reminded Dana that a part of being a good citizen meant to do what was right, and that she knew it already. Dana admitted that now she understood it better, that "talking about it in class made her realize that and connect the two [ideas]." Dana spoke of her wish to do more and

become a better citizen by practicing democracy better. She also admitted that it would start by following directions at home and at school to set a good example.

Erica scored 2 points on two out of the five questions on the pretest, 3 on two other questions, and 4 points on the remaining question. Her pretest score resulted in a total of 14 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Erica scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: The curriculum I experienced in school has made me more confident in seeking work in the global workforce. She marked a "strongly agree" box. Erica also indicated that she did not speak a second language.

Erica's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy showed Erica's willingness to learn more about being a good citizen. She admitted that this was the first class that talked about it and that "it was very interesting to know how much I can do as a citizen for my community." Erica also stated that she wanted to "share this knowledge with others, so that they can also practice democracy better."

During an interview that week, the researcher asked Erica to give a few examples of practicing democracy. She stated that it was "mostly about making the right choices, being respectful and making responsible decisions." The researcher asked what making responsible decisions meant for Erica, and she responded that it would mean "thinking of how something would affect others before doing it." The researcher made an observation in her field notes that Erica really came alive toward the end of the study. She actively participated in the debates this week and shared her opinion, even though one time was in disagreement with another student's opinion. Erica defended her viewpoint and brought valid examples to support the view.

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Frank scored 3 points on three out of the five questions on the pretest and 4 points on the remaining two questions. His pretest score resulted in a total of 17 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Frank also indicated that he did not speak a second language.

Frank's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy revealed his interest in this unit. Frank wrote a reflection about what he was already doing as an active citizen and what he could do even more to practice his democracy better and "help others understand it by setting a good example." Frank also was the only student who used other people as positive examples and how he "could take what they do and do it myself to be better."

During an interview that week, Frank spoke about his team and how "being a good citizen in your community is like being a good player on your team." This correlation inspired Frank; for the rest of the interview, he kept referring to this example. He mentioned that other players looked up to those who were successful, and he did not "know a successful player who was making bad decisions." Frank said, "When you know you are doing a right thing, it also gives you a confidence, and you can play better."

Frank was active during the debates that took place at school this week and tried to participate in every discussion by bringing examples from his own experience. Frank's attitude also improved in class as he started being more serious in class activities. The researcher made an observation that it did not come as a surprise that other two male participants started following Frank's example and became more serious during this week's unit.

Greg scored 1 point on one out of the five questions on the pretest, 2 points on two questions, and 3 points on the remaining two questions. His pretest score resulted in a total of 11 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 18 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Greg also indicated that he did not speak a second language.

Greg's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy focused around the videos that were watched and discussed in class this week. Greg used several examples drawn from the class discussions but did not use any of the examples from his own experience. He wrote down that he liked this week's activities the best because "we were able to argue with each other and have fun." Greg said that practicing democracy was more interesting than he thought because "it taught him how to support his answers and listen to others."

During an interview that week, the researcher asked Greg what democracy meant to him. Greg could not think of an answer. The researcher gave him some time to think about it, and Greg responded with "it is something you learn in history." The researcher then asked him to give an example of what he was doing as a good citizen, and Greg responded that he was attending school every day.

The field notes revealed that Greg was not very engaged during the first half of the unit but seemed to have changed his attitude considerably after watching one of the other participants take the activities more seriously. At the end of the interview, Greg mentioned that he enjoyed the activities so much he "talked about the debates at home." The researcher made a note to follow up with Greg upon the conclusion of the study to see if his interest could be extended.

Henry scored 3 points on four out of the five questions on the pretest and 4 points on the one remaining question. His pretest score resulted in a total of 16 points out of 20 possible points compared to a posttest total of 20 points (see Table C.1 and Figure C.4). Henry scored the highest on the following question on the pretest: The curriculum I experienced in school has made me more confident in seeking work in the global workforce. He marked the "strongly agree" box. Henry also indicated that he did not speak a second language.

Henry's response to a journal prompt about practicing democracy showed that he was highly interested in this topic. This written response was the longest one of all the participants in the study. Henry's engagement had consistently increased throughout the study, and this week seemed the most interesting for him.

During an informal interview that week, the researcher asked Henry to share his thoughts about the debates conducted in class. He responded that he was "thankful to have had an opportunity to participate in the activities this week." He mentioned that it helped him understand other people better to learn to respect their opinions and their differences. Henry mentioned a valid point from the debates: "We did not have to agree with each other, that was the whole point, but we did have to respect each other's opinions, and it helped me understand many things better." The researcher noted that Henry was active in every reflection this week and raised his hand in response to a question nearly every time it was asked. Henry was thoroughly enjoying both videos and debates, and he learned to express himself better and to support his point of view.

Interpretive Synthesis of the Study

The findings of this study indicated that a global education program at East Bridge Middle School influenced the critical global awareness level of its eighth-grade students. For this study, critical global awareness was defined as "enhancing the individual's ability to understand his or her condition in the community and the world and improving the ability to make effective judgments" (Harvey, 1976, p.265).

After careful data analysis of all four instruments, such as pre and posttests, interviews, journal writing, and field notes, three major themes emerged that cut across all four units of this study. The first theme showed that students had not been exposed to many global education topics in the past. They were eager to learn about the ways that they could promote the diversity in their community, how they could further the discussion about human rights, and how they could educate others about the importance of practicing democracy and what it looked like. However, students repeatedly said throughout the study that they never had time to learn about any of these concepts, and they wished such topics were introduced at schools as early as the elementary level.

The second theme showed the need for students to make more cross-cultural connections. Arguably, some of the most engaging activities that students participated in throughout this 8-week study included those involving the study of diverse cultures and the way these differed from students' culture.

The third theme was the student enthusiasm for sharing this knowledge with others. The researcher was surprised with the abundance of project ideas that the students generated to share with the community, from quick celebrations over the

morning announcements at their school to partnerships with local universities, from presentations at other schools in the district to making connections with internationally based companies to create a dialogue between global communities. Some ideas were successfully incorporated at East Bridge Middle School and allowed more students to be exposed to some global education topics and participate in various projects that connected them to local community members, as well as to students in other countries. Following is the interpretive analysis of each of the principles that support the emerging themes described above.

The study was based on a set of principles that one could use to support educators in nurturing effective citizens in a global context that was produced by a Diversity, Citizenship, and Global Education Consensus panel in 2005 (Banks et al., 2005). These principles played a critical role in global education research over the past decade and had a major influence on a theoretical framework of this action research study. One could use these principles to describe the following four concepts that created a foundation for the four units of this study: Students should be educated about the diversity in their local, national, and international communities and about the ways of how to accept and promote it; students should know about the interconnectedness and interdependency of citizens in local, regional, national, and global communities; the focus of the global citizenship education should be on human rights all over the globe; and students should learn about democracy and be allowed to practice it as one of the outcomes of this pedagogy. Based on this information, the researcher offers the following interpretations of the results to provide an insight into the impact of the global education program on its students.

Principle 1: Accepting and promoting diversity. According to Banks et al. (2005), students should be taught both the diversity and unity of the world around them. While acknowledging the internal differences, such as race, ethnicity, religion, and language within a community, students should learn to see that these unique characteristics unite cultures, which unite the world (Banks et al., 2005).

The results of the study indicated that the treatment had positively impacted seven out of eight participants, and there was no significant impact on the eighth participant. The pretest average score was 14.625, and posttest average score was 17.625 (see Table C.1). This finding was an increase of 20.5% from before the treatment to after the treatment.

Four students increased their pretest scores by 4 to 5 points. Three students increased their scores by 2 to 3 points, whereas one student decreased his pretest score by 1 point. Students' scores indicated that they improved their understandings of and became more aware of accepting and promoting diversity.

The most growth on the pretest was achieved on the following question: being a global citizen means respecting other people first. Most students either strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed with this statement on the pretest. However, they all strongly agreed with it on the posttest.

In a similar study, Benitez (2011) concluded that pre- and post-treatment results were an effective way to measure students' global sensitivity. He used the results of his study to conclude that global approach helped students become more accepting of several types of government, become more multicultural, and understand problems better on a global scale.

Student interviews showed several important findings. Seven out of eight participants significantly increased their understanding of accepting and promoting diversity. Three admitted that class discussions and videos watched together helped them "understand diversity better" because they could see the implications of accepting it and were exposed to many ways of promoting diversity.

One student stated that she never thought of diversity on a global scale. She talked about her family and what she thought was a lack of diversity growing up. She also stated that she "never really cared about people who were different from [her] at school." This student said that she always thought that because of how different some other families were, she considered them "weird" and talked about them in a "funny way" with her friends. She admitted that what she learned in class made her rethink her attitude toward such people, and made her want to talk to them more and learn more about themselves.

Two more students agreed that accepting diversity was critical because of how interconnected people were in this world. One participant said that during this class, he learned that "we all work as pieces of a large mechanism. If one of us is being ignored, or bullied, or being left out, then we can't work as one society." The last student said during the interview that "learned a lot" in class but could not support his answer. He failed to provide any examples, which helped the researcher conclude that for this student, there was no significant impact at that time.

Student journal writing gave more insight into the impact of this study, revealing students' attitudes and beliefs toward the topic. Eight out of eight

participants described that the material covered in class changed their thinking to some degree.

Two students wrote down that it was "interesting to think of what we learned from a different perspective." These two described themselves as minorities, and one of the videos made them think about how they were treated at school. These students said that many of their peers did not have an understanding of diversity and seemed ignorant regarding some culturally sensitive conversations. They both felt hopeful that if more students were exposed to programs like this, "then more people would understand each other better, understand me."

One student wrote down that she learned that diversity was "more than a color of your skin or a language you speak at home." She learned that it was a complex and multi-faceted concept that required an open mindset to understand and accept the concept. This student commented that she "never thought of issues of diversity critically, like we did in class." She said that she "had to put herself in place of other people and try to role-play situations that I would never even experience because I do not consider myself different." She concluded that she

> felt weird at first, and was tempted to say I was doing something wrong. But
> then I realized, that it was not me, it was others who could not understand my
> point of view and did not want to accept me.

One boy wrote that he felt he "learned something very important this week. I learned to appreciate the people for who they are instead of judging them."

The researcher observed several different behaviors that led her to believe that the diversity unit had an impact on students' attitudes in class. She noted that during

their first classroom discussion participants were eager to correct each other and force their point of view upon others. After a few days of discussions and activities, those students were not as vocal as before. One student who was arguing his viewpoint the most at first, was the quietest student at the end. His journal also showed a deep level of reflection and critical thinking. For the rest of the study, this participant seemed more aware of other students around him and had not been heard saying that "your way is wrong because that is how we do things in my family."

Students' beliefs were also influenced. Many came to class thinking that they were only different because of their neighborhoods. Three students of the same race seemed to have cliqued right away and somewhat distanced themselves from other students. During our third discussion, one of them learned that another student had a similar bullying incident when she was at the elementary school. At that time, all stopped and talked about it in more detail. Since then, these two students were seen working in collaboration more than before.

The social and emotional environment of the group also changed by the end of the unit. One student noted that she "realized that she does not feel different anymore. It is like everyone is so much different in this group, that there is no more right or wrong. Our differences make us the same."

Principle 2: Interdependence of communities. According to Banks et al. (2005), students should also be taught that to become active citizens in a multicultural democracy, they must understand that the world was interconnected and interdependent. Regions are influenced by people, organizations, and events, and cultures do not function as isolated entities; conversely, countries flourish as

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leadership's wellbeing is influenced by citizens all over the world (Banks, 2001; Osler & Starkey, 2003).

The results of the study indicated that the treatment had positively impacted seven out of eight participants, and there was no significant change in the pretest scores of the eighth participant. The pretest average score was 12.625, and posttest average score was 16.75 (see Table C.1). This finding was an increase of 32.67% from before the treatment to after the treatment.

Three students increased their pretest scores by 6 to 9 points. Two students increased their scores by 3 to 4 points. Two students increased their scores by 1 to 2 points. There was no effect on one student's pretest score. Students' scores indicated that they improved their understandings of and became more aware of interdependence of the communities.

In a similar study, Merryfield (1998) concluded that students learned from their own experiences, which made interdependency more relevant to them. Merryfield and Kasai (2004) urged teachers to show students how the communities had been connected and united for a long time now and what great effects such connections had on the communities' growth and development.

Student interviews showed several important findings. Many students started out without a basic understanding of interdependence of communities. When asked to define interdependence or interconnectedness at the beginning of the unit, six of the eight students failed to do it, admitting that they did not really understand or know anything about the topic. During the interview at the end of the unit, every one of the eight participants could describe the concept in their own words. Students used

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"inclusion of communities," "relationship between people and communities," and even "interrelatedness." All of these words were a part of the in-class discussions, videos, or reflections.

One participant noted that while watching one of the video clips, she was thinking of 'how great it would be if all communities were working together toward a common goal." She backed up her statement by saying how successful stories that were investigated that week made her realize that "everything is impossible until you try it." Students made connections that the world was getting smaller, and people stared to rely on each other increasingly.

Another student brought up a point that by the time she graduated, the technology would change even more, and the world would be even closer. She stated that it was important to learn about interdependence at schools because "it would prepare students for their future careers and jobs." Students actively contributed ideas and suggestions about how school leaders could teach such concepts and produced a few community projects that might be introduced at East Bridge Middle School next year.

Student journal provided the researcher with more insights into the impact of the study on students' attitudes and beliefs toward the topic of interconnectedness of communities. Eight out of eight participants commented that they not only learned something new, but they were also excited about the opportunities of bringing community projects into the school. One student's reflection stood out the most as she seemed to have realized the implications of interdependence on the entire world. She was interested in some details and conducted an online research of her own. As a

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result, she discovered that the most "politically and economically advantaged countries are the ones that work closely and rely on other countries for help, support and to be better." She noticed that on the other side of the spectrum were the isolated countries that were developing in isolation. She concluded that "being connected to others helps communities reflect and improve their structures."

Another student focused his journal entry on the importance of the discussions about interdependence of our world and how it would affect him personally. He stated that many school teachers did not teach such concepts explicitly, and students did not recognize the potential of this knowledge. This student stated, "It would be cool, if we had community projects as early as at the elementary schools like they do [in Denmark and Japan]." This student was referring to two videos watched in class that talked about the effects of early community projects on students' perceptions of the interconnectedness of the communities. He concluded that he was "inspired to start a project that would contribute something cool to our community."

The researcher's observation notes confirm that students' understanding of the concept of interconnectedness had improved greatly over the period of 2 weeks. At first, the researcher noted that students were not eagerly engaged in the dialogue. They were unsure about what they were supposed to answer and kept asking for more clarifications. Once they read an article about what interconnectedness looked like within a community, students started contributing more to the discussions.

Participants were especially excited when a whole group discussed various community projects that were launched in schools around the world. Several students were so interested that they stayed after class asking if they could bring a few of these

projects to East Bridge Middle School. The most notable was that students were not only hooked by the fun element of projects but also by implications and the effects on the entire school community.

Students' beliefs were also impacted greatly. Many students were saying that they either did not believe in the importance of interconnectedness or did not find it relevant. However, toward the end of the unit, all eight participants had heated debates about the numerous benefits of interdependence of communities on the local, state, national, and global levels. During this topic, students became closer as their own mini-community. They practiced what it meant to rely on each other and realized the collective power of working collaboratively. They experienced how their ideas were becoming alive through the support and help of each other. Their beliefs in the effects of interdependency of communities grew stronger, and ideas became clearer and more realistic.

Principle 3. Focus on the human rights. Arguably, one of the most important principles of this framework was the human rights principle. Researchers agreed that the understanding of human rights involved a foundation of global interconnectedness; through these lessons, students could learn to appreciate all people of the world collectively, as opposed to individual citizens from specific nations or regions of the world (Ramirez et al., 2006; Takkac & Akdemir, 2012).

The results of the study indicated that the treatment had positively impacted all eight participants, and there was moderate to significant increase in their pre to posttest scores. The pretest average score was 14.375, and posttest average score was

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18.375 (see Table C.1). This finding was an increase of 27.8% from before the treatment to after the treatment.

Two students increased their pretest scores by 7 to 11 points. Three students increased their scores by 3 to 4 points, whereas two other students stayed at their pretest scores, which was already the highest possible one. Students' scores indicated that they improved their understandings of and became more aware of the focus on the human rights. The question that students agreed with the most was "being a global citizen means I must be prepared to take responsibility for my actions."

In a similar study, McIntosh (2001) studied the effects of a new program on students who gained new perspectives on international cultures and issues. McIntosh reported that students could relate these issues to their own lives, which motivated them to look deeper into their roles of being global citizens. They felt encouraged to look further into careers in international studies (McIntosh, 2001).

Student interviews showed several important findings. All eight participants significantly increased their understandings of the focus on the human rights. Seven of the participants mentioned such words as "understanding," "embracing," "equality," and "dignity" during their interviews.

One student shared her observation of how being aware of "human rights and when such rights are violated helps you recognize diverse ways you can help people or promote the awareness too." Another student stated that he would like to see more people encourage each other to talk openly about human rights and how to protect them as a society:

I would like that my friends know this too because together we can think of something and do something, like, we can make videos of different human rights to show to school each month. It would be cool for all our kids to see it and to start thinking of it.

Another student stated that she was "really unaware of many issues that exist in our world." She admitted taking for granted many privileges available to her. During the interview, she shared that she "did not know that in some modern countries some people are not free to make their own decisions." When the researcher asked her to think of what implication this lack of knowledge could have on her local community, she said that she did not think they could "do anything to fix this for those people." However, she added that her community could talk about human rights to ensure they were protecting them by setting laws and rules, and they were teaching other people to be aware of their rights. The researcher also noted that this student's pretest score went up by the greatest number of points.

Student journal writing showed more information about their beliefs and attitudes toward the focus on human rights. All eight participants agreed that what was covered in class during the 2 weeks was important. The information helped them understand their rights, ways to protect these rights, and ways to advocate for human rights awareness.

One student wrote down that it got her "thinking about the different ways we can help others." She "realized that the important thing is that we are responsible for each other and especially for those people who are not as lucky as we are." She said the following:

I am in middle school. I can't do much to help. But I want to. I am seeing people whose rights are being taken away and it's not ok. But if all of students in our school come together, we can teach more people about their rights. It is important to know what they are and how to protect them. I would want my community to protect all of us. I think it is something we can do if we work on it together.

Two more students referenced that it was important to talk about human rights at school because they learned about citizenship and their responsibilities early in their lives. One boy mentioned that at his old school, they had citizenship meetings before school every day. They lasted less than 10 minutes, but students engaged in meaningful conversations about various responsibilities. Later in the week, this student mentioned these meetings in class, and other students responded that it would be a great idea to do at their school next year. When the researcher asked what benefits that such meetings could bring to our community, all eight students mentioned these would boost the level of awareness and responsibility in students.

The researcher's observation field notes also provided evidence that the unit on human rights influences students' attitudes and behaviors in class. Students felt passionate about the topic and were engaged in class activities. The researcher observed how one student volunteered to create a podcast with the summary of what was learned that week to share it with other students in the building. This project was not a homework assignment, but the student felt that it was appropriate for the podcast to be a part of East Bridge School's morning news.

Student beliefs also changed from student-centered to community-centered. The observer wrote down several instances when, during discussions, students switched from talking about personal benefits to the benefits that would influence the larger body of the community. One student wrote in his journal that he

> always thought of myself first, my needs, my wants and my wishes. But this week I learned that as a citizen I am responsible for my actions. I will try thinking of others more now cause I want to be a good citizen.

The researcher also noticed a change in the dynamics of the group. Over the weeks, the grouping became more heterogeneous than at the beginning of the study. The cliques that the students were a part of virtually disappeared, and boundaries between various groups erased. Students stopped focusing on their differences and started discussing their commonalities more. They were more open to working with other students and mentioned, on many occasions, that they were "enjoying the opportunities to learn about and to help each other."

Principle 4. Practicing democracy. According to Ochoa and Ochoa (2007) and Parker (2002), the best setting for students to practice democracy is in the classroom. They can learn about social issues and begin to form their independent thoughts on the matter.

The results of the study indicated that the treatment had a positive impact on all eight participants. The pretest average score was 15.75, and posttest average score was 19.75 (see Table C.1). This finding was an increase of over 25% from before the treatment to after the treatment, the highest increase of all the units covered in this study.

Three students increased their pretest scores by 7 to 6 points. Two students increased their scores by 4 to 5 points. One student increased his by 3 points, and one more student by 1 point. The last student scored the highest score of 20 on both pretests and posttests. Students' scores indicated that they improved their understandings of and became more aware of practicing democracy.

The most growth on the pretest was achieved on the following question: globalization makes it necessary for me to receive a global education in school. Most students either strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed with this statement on the pretest. However, they all strongly agreed with it on the posttest.

In a similar study, Hess (2009) conducted a series of case studies to measure effects of discussions in the classroom settings on students' future participation in local, national, and international matters. She concluded that students felt more empowered when allowed to express their opinions and held debates with classmates as well as other teachers (Hess, 2009).

After analyzing the data from student interviews, the researcher concluded that all eight participants significantly increased their understandings of practicing democracy. When initially asked to define democracy, five of the eight participants used words, such as "freedom" and "citizenship." One participant said that "democracy is our history," and the last two participants could not define the term at all.

During this unit, students held debates that centered around democracy; therefore, they received an opportunity to voice their opinions and express themselves as well as to listen to others. Such debates became one of the most important aspects

of this study. Students shared with the researcher that they not only thoroughly enjoyed the process but also learned "what practicing democracy really means."

The researcher asked all participants to describe what practicing democracy meant to them. One student said that to him it meant "making ways for all citizens to work together." He elaborated that it was,

> our responsibility to make sure that we express ourselves and support each other. We need to practice democracy by being responsible and making wise choices. We also need to help our friends who do not know how to do it right. We can help them and it would be another way to practice democracy.

Some other responses included "practicing democracy is having equal rights and protecting them," "choosing our leaders wisely and fairly," "making sure our government is fair to us," "being respectful and responsible at all times" and "sharing our knowledge with others, like we do at school."

Student journal writing also provided evidence that the treatment positively influenced students' beliefs and attitudes toward practicing democracy. Seven out of eight participants stated that this unit was the most important one for them. The unit influenced them directly more than the other units did.

One student wrote down that he thought his "family was not practicing democracy properly." He stated that he learned so much during this week that he was never told about, and he questioned why so many people he knew were not doing what was discussed in class during debates. His closing statement was a powerful message for a 13-year-old:

If we do not educate ourselves about the rights we have, we are missing out on what we deserve. If everyone stands together, we can create better future for all of us. I learned this week that I matter, and what I do matters too. It is important for me to know this. We need to make sure that everyone knows it too."

Another student wrote down that she enjoyed "the debates so much, I want to do it more." She said that they really made her reflect on what her role was as a responsible citizen and what she could do to "give back to her community." She said that this was a crucial step for her, and she "would love if she could somehow be a part of this experience for our younger students." She mentioned that she would love to volunteer her time and visit some elementary school classrooms to talk to younger students about "what practicing democracy really is and, most importantly, how important it is for us to always be responsible citizens and make responsible choices."

The researcher observed several different behaviors that led her to believe that practicing the democracy unit had a positive impact on students' attitudes in class. During this culminating week, the students were the most actively engaged in discussions, debates, journal writings, and interviews. The researcher wrote down that students felt they were free to express themselves, and they grasped this opportunity and enjoyed it to its fullest.

Student interactions took on a different form than what an observer noticed a few weeks ago. Students were eager to contribute to discussions and encouraged each other to speak up. The observer noticed that through learning about the democracy and citizenship, students became closer. One student expressed an opinion that she

felt we were "in a way, a part of a family" and that she would "miss not having such opportunities in high school." The researcher encouraged everyone to think about what this student said and all the ways that they themselves could be actively involved in spreading the word about practicing democracy in high school.

One student noted that she was thankful for having this opportunity, that she "learned a lot," and that she was "happy to have a chance to be a part of this group." Another student mentioned that he "would do it again, because it was fun." Almost everyone agreed that practicing democracy was an important concept that they learned. Seven out of eight students expressed interests in learning more about democracy in high school. Four students expressed interests in pursuing careers in politics. One student expressed an interest in missionary work around the world.

Conclusion

Banks (2004) stated that global educators helped students acquire knowledge and skills that they needed to possess in a fast-growing world consisting of diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic groups. Furthermore, he concluded that global education was closely related to social justice. Banks (2004) emphasized that the former helped students develop a commitment to the society to be more just.

The results of this study indicated that there was a positive impact of a global education program on the critical global awareness of students at East Bridge Middle School. The data indicated that students increased their sense of responsibility for other citizens in their communities. Students improved their awareness of global interconnectedness and understanding of interrelationships between them and their communities.

Mitchell and Parker (2011) stated that school leaders should equip students with the knowledge and skills to address the increasing number of economic, political, and social changes in our society. Students at East Bridge Middle School received such knowledge and skills as a part of their global education class. According to the results of this study, students significantly increased their knowledge of such concepts as diversity, democracy, human rights, and interdependence of their community. Additionally, they were exposed to perspective consciousness, state of planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices.

The researcher used class discussions, interviews, journal writings, debates, and other activities to educate students about the diversity in their local, national, and international communities. The researcher taught students how to accept and promote diversity. Students learned about interconnectedness and interdependency of citizens in these communities and focused on human rights all over the globe. Finally, students learned about democracy and could practice it in the classroom.

Student interviews showed that students became more engaged in the topics of citizenship and global education. They became interested in taking high school level classes that related to globalization. Some even spoke about pursuing college careers that deal with some kind of global aspect. Student journal writing showed that incorporating a global approach helped students become more accepting of diversity, become more multicultural, and understand problems on a global scale.

Hanvey (1976) defined global education as a "learning which enhances the individual's ability to understand his or her condition in the community and the world

and improves the ability to make effective judgments" (p. 1). Alongside what Hanvey (1976) stated in his research, this study considered nations, cultures, and civilizations; focused on understanding how these were interconnected and the responsibilities all have to one another; and provided students with realistic perspectives on world issues, problems, and prospects. Due to this study, students became more aware of the relationships between their own self-interests and the concerns of other people around the world.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Implications, and Recommendations

Problem of Practice (PoP)

Over the past few years of teaching at a school district in a southeastern state, the researcher noticed that her students had become increasingly interested in various global topics. Students wanted to talk about world events and cultures around the world. Yet, when they were asked more specific questions about global citizenship, students had a limited understanding of their own roles as world citizens. There seemed both an interest and a need to develop a global education program; therefore, the researcher decided to introduce one at her school.

In August 2017, leadership at East Bridge Middle School started offering an elective that incorporated components of global education and global citizenship to increase a global awareness level of eighth graders at the school. Goodson (2005) stated that those initiating a global education program recognized that the world had become smaller, and they offered more possibilities of inclusiveness toward all cultures. Many students expressed eagerness to learn more about global topics, and they expressed excitement about the opportunity of connecting with schools in different countries. Students could use this opportunity helps students to reflect not only on their own viewpoints but also on the importance of understanding other people.

Research Question

What impact will a global education program have on the critical global awareness level of eighth-grade students at East Bridge Middle School?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of global education program on the critical global awareness levels of eighth grade students at East Bridge Middle School. Based on Harvey (1976), Israel (2002), Pike and Selby (1988), Stromquist (2002), and Tye (2003), increased critical awareness was defined by students' abilities to identify with being part of an emerging world community to contribute to building their communities' values and practices. Through learning about citizenship and increasing their global awareness levels, students became more aware of diverse cultures, the need to accept such diversity, and the ways to promote it within their community. They could better define their roles as local and global citizens and the actions they need to take to model and encourage others to learn about global citizenship. Finally, they become problem-solvers using critical thinking and decision-making skills, as well as through communicating well with others.

Overview/Summary of the Study

The data were carefully analyzed, interpreted, and described in chapter 4 of this study. The researcher collected pre and posttest results, interviews, journal writings, and field notes. Chapter 5 summarizes the main principles emerged in this study, suggests an action plan, and offers suggestions for future research.

Principle 1: Accepting and promoting diversity. Students should be taught both the diversity and the unity of the world around them (Banks, 2008). Students

could increase their understanding of this principle by researching the implications of accepting the diversity and being exposed to diverse ways of promoting diversity. They admitted that their definition of diversity changed significantly because of the treatment. They said that they did not have an understanding of diversity and seemed ignorant regarding some culturally sensitive conversations. However, they became more aware of both the definition of diversity and its significance in this interconnected world; they expressed their hope that more students should be exposed to such programs to spread the knowledge and understand each other better.

Diversity is a complex and multi-faceted concept that requires an open mindset to understand and accept the notion. Due to this program, students could think about various issues critically and form their opinions about the diversity and lack of its understanding in the world. One of the comments made by a participant summarized the goal of this principle; he "learned to appreciate the people for who they are instead of judging them."

As the study progressed, participants seemed more aware of other students around them and were more open to accepting other students' answers. This finding also influenced the social and emotional environment of the group. One student expressed what others shared in their interviews and journal writings. This student "realized that she does not feel different anymore. It is like everyone is so much different in this group, that there is no more right or wrong. Our differences make us the same." While acknowledging the internal differences such as race, ethnicity, religion, and language within a community, students should learn to see that these unique characteristics unite cultures, which unite the world (Banks et al., 2005).

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Principle 2: Interdependence of communities. Communities are influenced by their people, organizations, and events. These are a part of cultures, but cultures do not function as isolated entities. Conversely, leadership of different countries flourish as their wellbeing is influenced by citizens all over the world (Banks, 2001; Osler & Starkey, 2003).

This researcher suggested several important findings. The participants gained a deeper understanding of the concept of interdependence of the communities. When defining interdependence using their own words, students mentioned "inclusion of communities," "relationship between people and communities," and "interrelatedness." They spoke of the importance of communities working together toward common goals and drew connections to how students within the school were interconnected and interdependent. They noted, "Being connected with others helps communities reflect and improve their structures."

Students recognized that teachers do not spend much time at school teaching others about the importance of interconnectedness, and students did not realize the potential of this knowledge. Toward the end of the study, several students felt inspired "to start a project that would contribute something cool to our community" when they got to high school.

At the beginning of the research, students were not eagerly engaged in the dialogue. They were unsure what they were supposed to answer and kept asking for more clarifications. However, toward the end of the unit, all eight participants had heated debates about the numerous benefits of interdependence of communities on the local, state, national, and global levels. They practiced what it meant to rely on

each other and realized the collective power of working collaboratively. They experienced how their ideas became alive through the support and help of each other. Their beliefs in the effects of interdependency of communities grew stronger, and their ideas became clearer and more realistic.

Principle 3. Focus on the human rights. Researchers agreed about the need for understanding that human rights laid a foundation of global interconnectedness. Through these lessons, students could learn to appreciate all people of the world collectively, as opposed to individual citizens from specific nations or regions of the world (Ramirez et al., 2006; Takkac & Akdemir, 2012).

Students collectively agreed that learning about human rights helped them understand and recognize many ways that individuals could help other people whose rights were violated by simply promoting human rights awareness. Several students stated that they would like to see more people encourage each other to talk openly about human rights. One student said,

> I would like that my friends know this too because together we can think of something and do something, like, we can make videos of different human rights to show to school each month. It would be cool for all our kids to see it and to start thinking of it.

Another student made the following entry in her journal.

I am in middle school. I can't do much to help. But I want to. I am seeing people whose rights are being taken away and it's not ok. But if all of students in our school come together, we can teach more people about their rights. It is important to know what they are and how to protect them. I would want my

community to protect all of us. I think it is something we can do if we work on
it together.

The results of the study showed that the unit on human rights influenced students'
attitudes and behaviors in class. They felt passionate about the topic and were
engaged in the class activities.

Student beliefs also changed from student-centered to community-centered, as
evidenced by the following journal entry of one of the students:

I always thought of myself first, my needs, my wants and my wishes. But this
week I learned that as a citizen I am responsible for my actions. I will try
thinking of others more now cause I want to be a good citizen.

McIntosh (2001) found similar findings in a study on the effects of a new program on
students who gained new perspectives on international cultures and issues. McIntosh
reported that students could relate these issues to their own lives, which motivated
them to look deeper into their roles of being global citizens. They were encouraged to
look further into careers in international studies (McIntosh, 2001).

Principle 4. Practicing democracy. Ochoa and Ochoa (2007) and Parker
(2002) argued that the best setting for students to practice democracy was in the
classroom. They could learn about social issues to form their independent thoughts on
the matter. This research study had a significant effect on all eight student
participants. Their definition of democracy transformed from "freedom,"
"citizenship," and "democracy is our history" to "practicing democracy is having
equal rights and protecting them," "choosing our leaders wisely and fairly," "making

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sure our government is fair to us," "being respectful and responsible at all times," and "sharing our knowledge with others, like we do at school."

According to Hess (2009), students feel more empowered when allowed to express their opinions and hold debates with classmates, as well as other teachers. One student's summary best described the accomplishment of this study, as well as confirmed Hess' statement above:

> If we do not educate ourselves about the rights we have, we are missing out on what we deserve. If everyone stands together, we can create better future for all of us. I learned this week that I matter, and what I do matters too. It is important for me to know this. We need to make sure that everyone knows it too.

Conducted as a part of the study, debates helped students reflect on their roles as responsible citizens and what they could do to give back to their communities. Several students mentioned that they would love to volunteer their time and visit elementary schools to talk to younger students about "what practicing democracy really is and, most importantly, how important it is for us to always be responsible citizens and make responsible choices."

Summary. This study showed students' high interests in globalization topics and their desires for more knowledge. They wanted to learn about their roles in their communities and what effects they could have on the development of a democratic global society. Students were engaged in the study and especially loved the social interaction part. The researcher discovered that the most favorite aspect of this study was democratic debates during which students practiced expressing their opinions and

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sharing their viewpoints with each other. Diversity, interdependence, human rights, and democracy became the four major principles of this study, which were used to develop an action plan for classroom instruction.

Action Plan

The researcher attempted to measure the effects of Global Education program on students' critical global awareness level by closely examining such topics as accepting and promoting diversity, understanding interdependence of the communities, focusing on human rights, and practicing democracy. After the careful analysis of the data and after sharing the results with the school's leadership, the researcher came up with five action steps that she planned to incorporate in her global education class next semester: (a) identifying a theme for global project, (b) creating a collaborative final product, (c) preparing students for safe online collaboration, (d) focusing on building relationships, and (e) bringing local and global communities together.

Action Step 1: Identify a theme for a global project. Teachers of global education class must have some kind of a final project based on students' interests and needs. This action research showed that students were interested and highly motivated to engage in collaborative projects with students in their communities, as well as students in other countries. By the end of this research, the participants developed several projects that they were motivated to start or introduce on a high school level next year.

Capalbo (2012) stated that global education projects "develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more

peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" (p. 10). He further explained that such programs would encourage students from around the world to become more actively involved in learning about differences and ways to bring those differences together. Such global projects teach students to focus on common goal and build skills from various perspectives. However, teachers should base the project on students' interests to allow them to take as much charge of the project as possible.

Action Step 2: Create a collaborative final product. Teachers should always plan with an end product in mind. Students should be involved in such planning, as well. Based on students' interests and a theme of a global project, students should be encouraged to apply their creativity to produce an end product in collaboration with other students. This creativity can include social media campaigns, exhibits, presentations, video recordings, songs, articles, blogs, and so on.

Coughlin and Kajder (n.d.) stated that global collaborators aimed to improve learning, breakdown classroom walls, and develop culturally aware learners. Global education was founded on concepts of collaboration, socialization, and various levels of critical reflections; therefore, one must include a global perspective in all forms of teaching (see Zins et al., 2004). Thus, a final project served as a culminating activity, thereby giving students a chance to share their newly acquired values and beliefs with their peers and other community members.

Action Step 3: Prepare students for safe online collaboration. Communication is an important skill that lays a foundation for any successful global project. According to a Profile of SC Graduate collaboration, teamwork, communication critical thinking, and problem solving are all a part of world-class

skills. Students must understand the proper etiquette of online communication and be willing to engage in a meaningful partnership with other students. Throughout this action research, participants were reminded of appropriate online communication to avoid issues, such as bullying, use of inappropriate language, and so on. It was best that students researched proper etiquette during the initial stages of the class and worked on creating rules or contracts as a whole class. Involving students in such decision making allowed them to share a part of responsibility in this class and showed them that their opinion mattered.

Another aspect of online safety that was relevant to this class was cultural awareness and sensitivity. As students were likely to interact with members of other cultures, teachers were responsible for making sure they were prepared for cross-cultural dialogues. One way that the researcher addressed it in this study was by reminding students of different perspectives, being considerate to others, respectful of differences, and aware of perceptions. Wade, Fauske, and Thompson (2008) suggested that students were given time to practice their online dialogues to help them reflect on and avoid stereotypical thinking to foster critically reflective problem-solving regarding issues of language, culture, and race (p.1).

Action Step 4: Focus on building relationships. Harris (2015) stated, "By building relationships that value all stakeholders— including teachers, students, parents, and community members— actions lead to a thriving school" (p.1). The key to success of a global education program was for both students and teachers to focus on building relationships with global partners. For a global partnership to work, students must have an understanding of each other and each other's culture. By

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introducing themselves and exchanging stories and responses, students were more engaged in cultural exchange and more likely to learn more through meaningful dialogues and collaboration. Harris (2015) suggested starting building relationships by "establishing trusting relationships based on mutual support, respect, and empowerment, and demonstrating cultural responsiveness by embracing diversity and integrating multicultural awareness throughout the curriculum, and developing a learning culture to nurture student and teacher achievement" (p.1).

Action Step 5: Bring local and global communities together. Engaging local and global community partners in global education projects makes for a more meaningful partnership and opens more opportunities for students. Community members can have an input in the project by participating in interviews, mentoring/guiding students, leading expert presentations, as well as watching students present their final projects. Meaningful feedback can not only validate students' efforts but also inspire them to research the topic furthermore or even purse a career in a relative field. When local and global community members are engaged in students' research projects, they have an opportunity to experience real-world connections and are motivated to work together on making a meaningful contribution to their community.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study had several limitations, such as a small sample size, time constraints, and a topic that could be narrowed down more. Future research is needed to discover the effects of a global education curriculum on middle school students. Following are a few suggestions for future research that may be considered.

Larger sample size. One major limitation of the study was its participant size. There were only eight participants, which made it difficult to find significant relationships from the data to be considered representative of group of middle school students to whom results would be generalized. This particular limitation was less relevant than others due to the qualitative nature of the study.

Longitudinal study. This study took place over 8 weeks. The researcher believed that the effects of a global education curriculum were long term, but further research was required. The researcher contemplated a follow up with the participants of this research during their junior or senior years of high school to collect more data about the long-term effects of this program.

Narrowed down focus. This researcher focused on four principles that became the framework of this study. Future research could focus on each of the four principles individually by analyzing the effects and making conclusions as to which are the most influential and which ones need some revisions in future.

Conclusion

This researcher analyzed the effects of global education program on the critical global awareness level of eighth grade students. This researcher studied the impact of the program on eight participants. There were five female and three male participants enrolled in a global education elective class at East Bridge Middle School. The class met every other day for 90 minutes.

The study was broken down into four units based on four principles that supported educators in nurturing effective citizens in a global context (e.g., Banks et al., 2005). These principles played a crucial role in research over the past decade and

influenced the theoretical framework of this action research study. According to Banks (2008), the following concepts should lay a foundation of any global education curriculum: Students should be educated about the diversity in their local, national, and international communities and how to accept and promote it (first principle); students should know about the interconnectedness and interdependency of citizens in these communities (second principle); the focus of the global citizenship education should be on the human rights all over the globe (third principle); and students should learn about democracy and be allowed to practice it as one of the outcomes of this pedagogy (fourth principle).

The data analysis showed three major themes: the lack of student exposure to global education topics at school, the need for students to make more cross-cultural connections, and the student enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge with others. These themes were apparent in student interviews, journal writings, and researcher's field note observations. The researcher used these to identify and analyze the effects of the global curriculum on students' global awareness levels.

Although the study indicated that there was a significant impact, the researcher believed that further research was needed to analyze the major effects of global education curriculum and what long-term impact it might have on students. Global educators spark students' curiosity about the world and globalization, which helps students make sense of global issues and recognize global opportunities (Boix-Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). Through engaging in the global education process, students learn to collaborate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds,

appreciate the differences that make the world unique and interconnected, and join others to solve various global issues.

Throughout this study, the researcher observed several changes in student behaviors. While learning about accepting and promoting diversity, several participants remarked how they never thought of the importance of acknowledging differences and always took these for granted. One student wrote in his journal: "We have so much to learn and so much love and understanding to share with each other. We need to accept people the way they are because we need each other the way we are."

During a whole class discussion, students stated that people should embrace and celebrate differences and uniqueness. Several students admitted that they judged others before and considered people weird just because they did things differently or looked differently. They stated that this class helped them understand the importance of taking time and appreciating the diversity around them.

The dialogues that took place throughout the research played a critical role in helping students discover their roles as citizens of their local communities, their nations, as well as citizens of the world. When the researcher first spoke of citizenship, many students did not have a clear definition, nor could they think of any attributes of a global citizen. They contributed to first discussions reluctantly and did not have much dialogue going. However, after reading articles, watching video clips, and speaking to other students in different countries, participants considered how being active citizens could benefit them and their communities.

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Once students' interests were sparked, they were eager to learn ways to contribute as citizens, as well as share their knowledge and ideas with others. They all agreed that learning about citizenship should start at early age and should be encouraged at school. The researcher was surprised with the number of great project ideas that students produced that they would like to start working on in high school next year.

As the researcher shifted her focus to the action plan, she followed the five steps described earlier in this chapter: (a) identifying a theme for a global project, (b) creating a collaborative final product, (c) preparing students for safe online collaboration, (d) focusing on building relationships, and (e) bringing local and global communities together. Having a theme and a final project in mind helped students put into practice what they learned in this program, as well as to contribute to their local communities. This process should provide a well-defined and narrowed theme for further research. Moreover, the researcher intended to increase the sample size, as well as the duration of the study, to see if more themes would emerge in the future.

In conclusion, the teacher of this global education program taught students to identify with being a part of an emerging world community to contribute to building their communities' values and practices. Through learning about citizenship, they became more aware of diverse cultures, the need to accept such diversity, and the ways to promote it within their communities. They could better define their roles as local and global citizens and the actions they needed to take to model and encourage others to learn about global citizenship. Finally, students became problem-solvers

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using critical thinking and decision-making skills, as well as through communicating

well with others.

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Appendix A: Parental Consent Form

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am a student in a graduate program of University of South Carolina seeking a doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction. I will be observing and collecting data from students enrolled in my Global Education class. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of Global Education program on the critical awareness level of eighth grade students at our school. Students will take a pretest, make a few journal entries, have informal interviews with me and take a posttest at the end of the research. This study will last six weeks.

School's and individual's identities will remain strictly anonymous and confidential. There are no risks involved in the participation in this study. Some benefits to students include increased awareness of globalization and a better understanding of global citizenship. The results will be reported in my dissertation and shared in front of a dissertation committee. Your consent to use your child's work is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Marina Mosneaguta, Doctoral Candidate

_____I wish my child to participate in this research.

_____I do not wish my child to participate in this research.

Parent/Guardian's Name_____ Child's Name _____

Parent/Guardian's signature_____

Appendix B: Global Education Values and Attitudes Survey

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1.	I need to learn more than one language because people who speak languages are generally considered well-educated.				
2.	I am taught that competitiveness is very important in an interconnected world.				
3.	No need to learn to stay informed about important global events in school.				
4.	Being a global citizen means respecting other people first.				
5.	Being globally interconnected means I have to learn responsibility to others in the world.				
6.	Teachers help us understand our interdependence by encouraging community service				
7.	I need more discussions in school about the interdependence of our world and how it will affect me.				
8.	I do not have to learn to respect other people's cultural differences to be a global citizen.				
9.	Reducing waste is everyone's duty as a global citizen.				
10.	Understanding the cultures of the world is not always informative and interesting in school.				
11.	I learn to express my opinion when I hear or see injustice towards other human beings.				
12.	Being a global citizen means I must be prepared to take responsibility for my actions.				

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13.	Globalization makes it necessary for me to receive a global education in school.				
14.	I believe that being a global citizen means you are less patriotic.				
15.	Most teachers prepare us to be lifelong learners to stay competitive.				
16.	I am taught as a global citizen I must work towards peace.				
17.	The social activities in school are getting me ready to become a member of a global society.				
18.	Knowing more than one language improves my job opportunities in the global workforce.				
19.	I am being prepared to assume my role as a global citizen in the world.				
20.	The curriculum I experienced in school has made me more confident in seeking work in the global workforce.				

Table C.1. *Pre and Posttest Results*

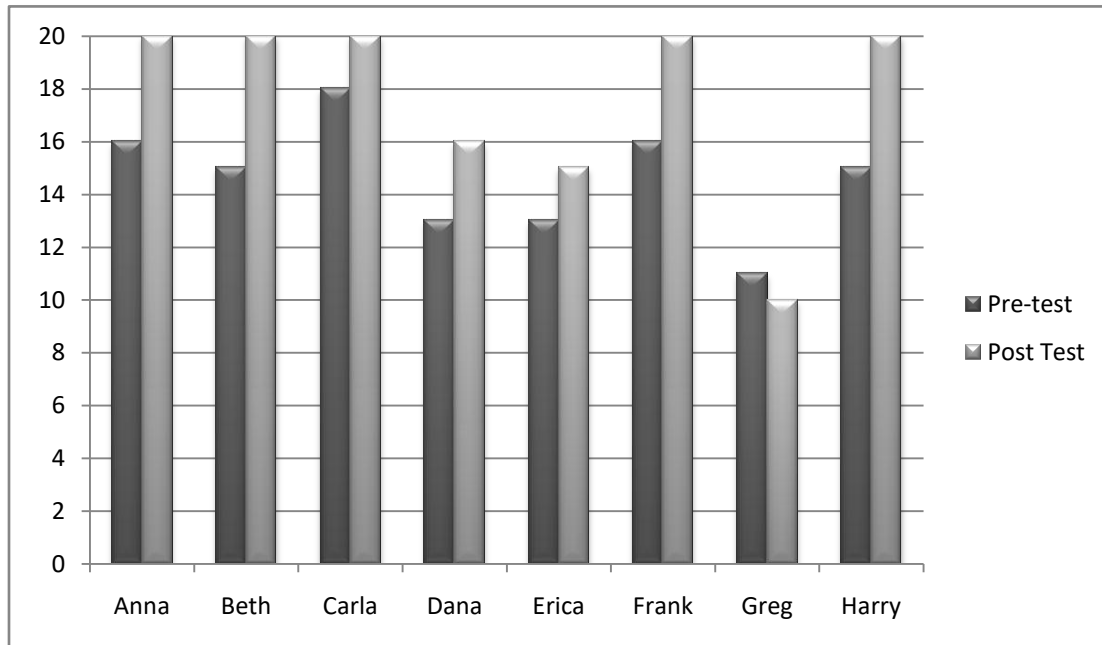| Names	Accepting and promoting diversity		Interdependence of the communities		Focus on the human rights		Practicing democracy	
	Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post test
Anna	16	20	12	20	20	20	19	20
Beth	15	20	11	11	17	20	14	20
Carla	18	20	19	20	20	20	20	20
Dana	13	16	12	14	10	17	15	20
Erica	13	15	8	12	8	11	14	20
Frank	16	20	14	20	16	20	17	20
Greg	11	10	14	17	8	19	11	18
Harry	15	20	11	20	16	20	16	20
Total Averages	14.625	17.625	12.625	16.75	14.375	18.375	15.75	19.75

Figure C.1. Accepting and promoting diversity pre and posttest results.
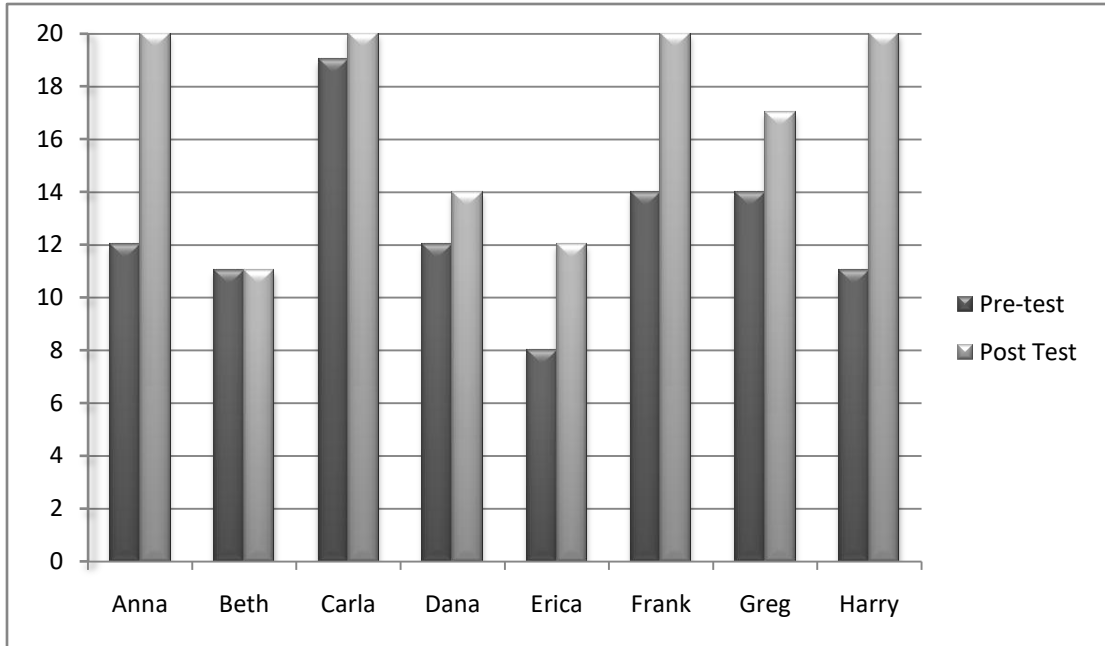
132

www.manaraa.com

Figure C.2. Interdependence of communities' pre and posttest results.

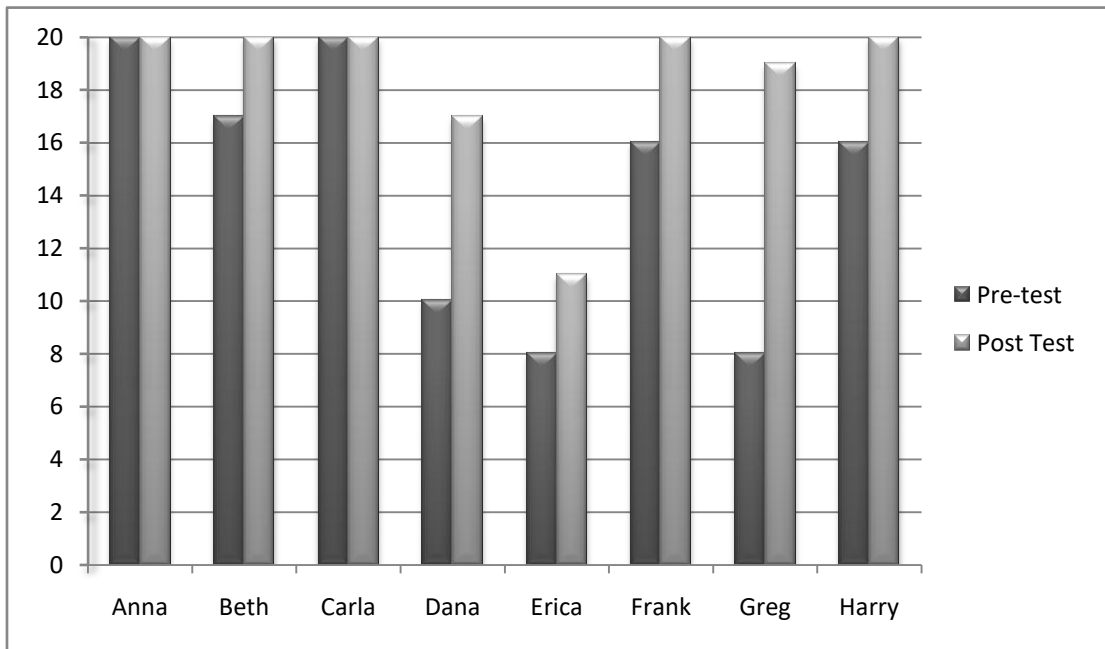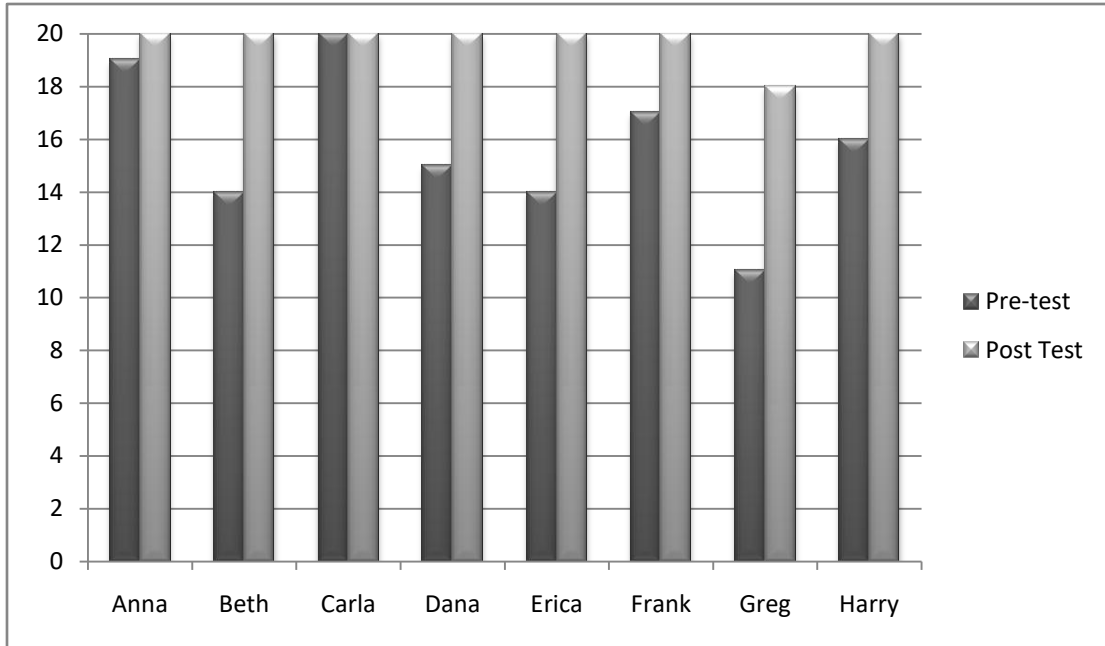*Figure C.3.* Focus on human rights' pre and posttest results.

Figure C.4. Practicing democracy pre and posttest results.