

# Policy and Practice

## A Development Education Review

### Pedagogical Responses to the Meta Crisis: The Role of Development Education

Report on a Development Education Seminar  
27 May 2026

SEMINAR ORGANISED BY CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION AND COMHLÁMH AND FUNDED BY IRISH AID





# Contents

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| 1 | Centre for Global Education and Comhlámh            | 5  |
| 2 | Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review | 7  |
| 3 | Aim of the seminar                                  | 9  |
| 4 | Presentation by Katie Chapple                       | 11 |
| 5 | Presentation by Gertrude Cotter                     | 18 |
| 6 | Presentation by Brigid Golden                       | 28 |
| 7 | Seminar Feedback                                    | 37 |

## Acknowledgements

This is a report on a development education seminar organised by the Centre for Global Education in partnership with Comhlámh held on 27 May 2026. The seminar was titled *Pedagogical Responses to the Meta Crisis: The Role of Development Education* and debated the content of Issue 42 of the Centre for Global Education's journal *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*. The Centre for Global Education would like to thank Caroline Murphy, CEO of Comhlámh, and her colleagues for promoting the event. We also thank the chair of the event, Bernie Brummell (Maynooth University) and the speakers: Katie Chapple (Director, WorldWise Global Schools), Gertrude Cotter (University College Cork), and Brighid Golden (Mary Immaculate College). The seminar was organised as part of a three-year development education project funded by Irish Aid.

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# 1 Centre for Global Education (CGE) and Comhlámh

## 1.1 Centre for Global Education

The Centre for Global Education was established in 1986 to provide education services that enhance awareness of international development issues. Its central remit is to provide learning that enables individuals and organisations to address the root causes of poverty, inequality and injustice at local and global levels. The Centre's resources and training programmes enable learners to understand the cultural, economic, social and political influences on our lives that result from our growing interdependence with other countries and societies. They also provide the skills, values, knowledge and understanding necessary to facilitate action that will contribute to poverty eradication both locally and globally.

### The Centre for Global Education's main aims are to:

- Act as a resource for research and education on global issues;
- Support the work of groups and organisations that foster social and economic equality at all levels;
- Facilitate networking and co-operation with relevant agencies and groups;
- Provide training and resources on development issues;
- Encourage the use of development education methodologies to bring about change at a local and global level;
- Network with partner organisations that share our values and commitment to social justice and equality;
- Enable action that addresses the root causes of poverty and injustice, locally and globally.

### The Centre's Values are as follows:

- Partnerships with individuals and organisations working to create an equal and just world.
- Enablement of effective action to challenge global inequality and injustice.
- Ensuring our work is informed by the needs and ideas of the global South.
- Promoting active learning in all our work.

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## 1.2 Comhlámh

Founded in 1975, Comhlámh is the Irish Association of International Development Workers and Volunteers. As a membership organization, it builds and mobilises community around global justice issues. Comhlámh nurtures and supports work for change, locally and globally, and advocates for a world beyond injustice. Comhlámh has almost 50 years' experience of solidarity-based engagement that addresses the most pressing issues of our time. It supports people and organisations to mobilise for global justice, including through values-led volunteering, humanitarian responses, and active citizenship. All of Comhlámh's work is underpinned by a commitment to Global Citizenship Education (GCE), which deepens understanding of the structural causes of inequality and unsustainability, as well as the connections between local and global challenges. Overall, Comhlámh provides a unique and vital space to work in solidarity with others towards a shared goal of a world beyond injustice.

Together with its community, Comhlámh is committed to achieving local and global justice through cultivating:

- A solidarity-based movement that draws on its history to create new responses to the unprecedented challenges the world is facing.
- The skills, dispositions, and stamina to stay involved in generating opportunities for change at a time of deep uncertainty and challenges.

Comhlámh believes that by providing the space for people to come together to collaborate, learn and share, ideas and possibilities for achieving common goals will emerge.

Comhlámh's community is made up of:

- Comhlámh members, member groups and the people and organisations they connect with.
- Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs) and organisations that support Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice for VSAs.
- People who volunteer, work, or act in solidarity with communities in the Global South.
- Migrant solidarity responders and humanitarian responders.
- Irish national volunteering sector (Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Ireland).
- Networks, educators, institutions and groups working to achieve local and global justice.

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Bluesky: [@comhlamh.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/comhlamh.bsky.social)

## 2 Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review

*Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review* is a bi-annual, peer reviewed, open access journal which aims to enhance capacity in the development education (DE) sector locally and internationally by sharing good practice, supporting research and strengthening debate in DE. Over the past 21 years, 42 issues of the journal have been published on the journal's web platform: [www.developmenteducationreview.com](http://www.developmenteducationreview.com).

Each issue of the journal is constructed around a theme chosen by an Editorial Group which also assists with the peer reviewing of articles. The strategic aims of the journal are to: Provide a space for practitioners to critically reflect on their practice;

- Discuss the main challenges faced by development education practitioners;
- Celebrate and promote good practice in development education;
- Debate the policy environment in which development education is delivered;
- Share new research in development education;
- Strengthen links between development education and related adjectival educations such as human rights and sustainable development.



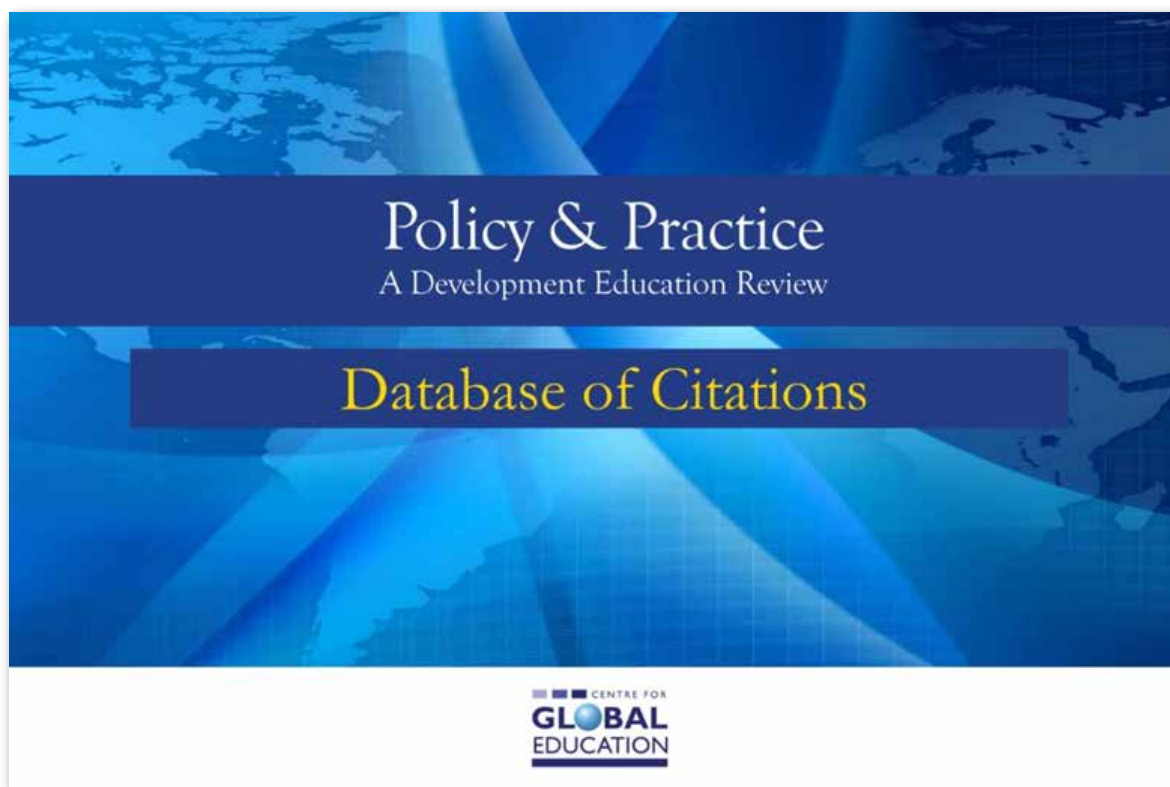
In 2025, the *Policy and Practice* web site received 505,211 unique visits and 293,776 visits in total from the global North and South. The top 10 visitor countries to the web site, on the basis of pages viewed, from January to December 2025 were the following:

| Countries          | Number of Pages viewed |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| United States      | 304,973                |
| Poland             | 48,129                 |
| Great Britain      | 30,153                 |
| China              | 26,645                 |
| Russian Federation | 26,386                 |
| India              | 25,702                 |
| Canada             | 19,883                 |
| Japan              | 10,821                 |
| France             | 9,219                  |
| Netherlands        | 8,983                  |

The journal content is disseminated by EBSCO which is a United States-based provider of research databases, e-journals, magazine subscriptions, e-books and discovery service to libraries of all kinds. This has supported the dissemination of journal content to academic institutions across the world. The journal has also been accepted by Scopus, an abstract and citation database launched in 2004 which covers nearly 36,377 titles

from approximately 11,678 publishers. The journal is also a publisher member of the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) which is 'a community-curated online directory that indexes and provides access to high quality, open access, peer-reviewed journals'. All of these journal directories enhance the promotion and dissemination of the journal and ensure its content supports teaching, learning and research.

## Journal Citations



One of the qualitative methods used to evaluate the impact of the journal on research and practice involves monitoring the number of citations generated by *Policy and Practice* articles in other books and journals, and in articles published by *Policy and Practice* itself. The citations database was last updated in April 2026 and showed that a total of 6,636 citations had been generated by *Policy and Practice* articles of which 6,094 were found in external journals and 542 in other *Policy and Practice* articles. This total represented an increase of 929 on April 2025. The citations have appeared in 835 journals and 441 books covering a range of academic disciplines and subject areas reflecting the multi-disciplinary nature of the journal's content. The research on citations also showed that *Policy and Practice* articles have been cited in 503 theses, dissertations and academic papers, which reflects the extent to which the journal is supporting new research in higher education. Citations were also found in 134 non-governmental organization publications which suggests that *Policy and Practice* has managed to sustain a strong level of readership in the NGO sector as well as academia. The *Policy and Practice* Citations Database is available [here](#).

### 3 Aim of the Seminar

The seminar was organised to present and debate the content of [Issue 42](#) of the Centre for Global Education's bi-annual, open access, peer reviewed journal *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*. The theme of this issue was 'Pedagogical Responses to the Meta Crisis: The Role of Development Education', which reflected on the intersecting crises currently impacting our world and how we can respond as development educators. Issue 42 asked to what extent have the development education and international development sectors risen to the challenge of the meta crisis and applied a systemic analysis to the ecological, economic, political and social crises enveloping our world? The evidence presented in the collection of articles published in Issue 42 suggested that the global education sector could do more to engage in direct action in response to the meta crisis. As Gertrude Cotter suggested in her Focus article: 'mainstream educational structures often prioritise cognitive knowledge and abstract analysis, neglecting the embodied, affective, and political dimensions of learning'.

And yet Issue 42 also carried powerful examples of global learning in a range of educational sectors and environments that have responded with contrasting and measured approaches to the meta crisis. Three of the authors who published in Issue 42 presented their articles for discussion at the webinar with colleagues. They included a paper that has monitored the delivery of development education in their first year of practice by primary school teachers in Ireland. The second paper presented the learning delivered by the Irish state-sponsored Youthreach programme which engaged with early school leavers on the margins of education. And the third paper discussed the pedagogical outcomes arising from a student encampment for Palestine at University College Cork through the collaboration of students and supportive members of staff. The webinar was held on Zoom and the three articles presented at the workshop were as follows:

[Global Citizenship Education from the Margins: Insights from Youthreach and Alternative Education in Ireland](#)

**Katie Chapple and Joanne O'Flaherty**

[Camp Saoirse and Direct Action as Radical Pedagogy](#)

**Gertrude Cotter**

[From Theory to Practice: Global Citizenship Education in the First Year of Primary Teaching During Times of Crisis](#)

**Brigid Golden, Jenny Gannon, Benjamin Mallon and Fiachra Kennedy**

**The authors who presented at the seminar were:**



**Bernie Grummell (Chair)** is Associate Professor in the Departments of Education and Adult & Community Education, Maynooth University. She is the co-director of the Doctorate in Higher and Adult Education Programme, and the Structured PhD in Adult & Community Education, as well as co-director of the Centre for Research in Adult Learning and Education in the Department of Adult and Community Education.



**Katie Chapple** is the Director of WorldWide Global Schools. She was an English and Geography Post-Primary teacher for over 20 years. She has also worked as a consultant and student facilitator with UNICEF, MIC, and the Department of Education. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education Leadership, Master of Education and a PhD in eliciting youth voices.



**Gertrude Cotter** lectures in the School of Education at University College Cork. Her work focuses on global citizenship and development education, critical global justice education, and the role of higher education in addressing inequality, power, and global responsibility. She is Academic Coordinator of the Praxis Project, a university-wide initiative supporting staff and students to engage critically with global justice issues through participatory, creative, and action-oriented pedagogies.



**Brigid Golden** is Assistant Professor in Global Citizenship Education at Mary Immaculate (MIC) College, Ireland, and represents MIC on the national DICE (Development and Intercultural Education) Project Network. She is the author of *Critical Thinking for Global Citizenship Education: A Conceptual Framework* (2025, Palgrave MacMillan) and editor of *Curious Teachers, Critical Classrooms* (2023, Dublin: DICE Project). She is also the host of the podcast series *Curious and Critical GCE* on Spotify.



A recording of this presentation is available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z7R-o9FAD1AkSSTNzORYoXRX90LFSnJN/view?usp=sharing>

## 4 Presentation by Katie Chapple



### Global Citizenship Education in Youthreach and Alternative Education Settings Experiences, Enablers and Challenges



Dr. Katie Chapple & Dr. Joanne O'Flaherty



## Why focus on Youthreach and alternative settings?

- Most GCE research focuses on mainstream schools and higher education
- Limited research on:
  - early school leavers
  - marginalised learners
  - alternative education settings
- Youthreach offers:
  - flexible curricula
  - relationship-based learning
  - learner-centred approaches
  - Potentially powerful context for transformative GCE
- These settings may offer important pedagogical responses to contemporary global crises through relational, critical and learner-centred approaches.



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## Presentation by Katie Chapple

### Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

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- GCE aims to develop:
  - critical thinking
  - empathy
  - participation
  - awareness of inequality and injustice
  - action for social justice
- **Key tension: 'Soft' GCE**
  - awareness
  - empathy
  - charity
- **Critical GCE**
  - systems of power
  - inequality
  - transformation
  - action



### What are Youthreach and Alternative Settings?

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- State-supported programme for early school leavers aged 13-15 (Alternative Education) and 15-20 (Youthreach)
- **Characteristics:**
  - small class groups
  - flexible curriculum
  - QQI Levels 1-4
  - strong pastoral supports
  - experiential learning
  - relationship-centred practice
- **Aims to support young people to:**
  - re-engage with education
  - build confidence
  - progress to further education, training, and employment



## 4 Presentation by Katie Chapple

### Research Question

*'What were the experiences, enablers and challenges of embedding GCE in Youthreach and alternative education settings?'*

- **Methodology**
- Qualitative study
- 5 educators
- 4 settings:
  - 3 Youthreach centres
  - 1 alternative education setting
- Data collection:
  - reflective prompts over 7 months
  - semi-structured interviews
- Inductive thematic analysis



### Theme 1: GCE as Transformative Learning: *Educators viewed GCE as transformative*

- Participants described GCE as:
  - empowering
  - relational
  - critical
  - action-oriented
- **Key ideas:**
  - empathy
  - interdependence
  - critical awareness
  - learner agency
- *'Students come to understand that everything and everyone is connected; therefore, everything they do matters' (J3)*



## 4 Presentation by Katie Chapple

### Educators' Personal Histories Matter: *Personal experiences shaped GCE practice*

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- Participants linked GCE to:
  - exclusion
  - stereotyping
  - inequality
  - gender injustice
  - experiences of 'otherness'
- 'This requires me to constantly check and challenge my own assumptions, biases, and privileges' (J3)



### Theme 2: How GCE Was Enacted: *GCE in practice*

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- **Approaches included:**
  - climate activism
  - sustainability projects
  - ethical consumption
  - restorative circles
  - cross-curricular teaching
  - experiential learning
  - digital campaigns
- **Cross-curricular examples:**
  - Maths → inequality statistics
  - English → reflective writing
  - Woodwork → SDG models



## 4 Presentation by Katie Chapple

### Enablers of GCE:

*What supported GCE?*

- **Key enablers:**
  - small class sizes
  - strong relationships
  - flexible curriculum
  - collaborative staff teams
  - leadership support
  - CPD and external supports
  - whole-centre approaches
- *'We're all on the same page... it's a real advantage for a smaller setting' (I3)*



### Challenges and Tensions: *Challenges of embedding GCE*

- **Learner-related challenges:**
  - attendance
  - low confidence
  - literacy difficulties
  - vulnerability
  - global issues feeling distant or overwhelming
- **Structural challenges:**
  - lack of time
  - limited resources
  - inconsistent institutional support
  - GCE treated as an 'add-on'
- *'Building confidence to think critically takes time' (J1)*



## 4 Presentation by Katie Chapple

### Key Discussion Points: *What does this study suggest?*

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- Youthreach and alternative settings may offer important pedagogical responses to contemporary global crises through:
  - relational learning
  - learner agency
  - critical dialogue
  - experiential approaches
  - meaningful links between lived and global realities
- But:
  - sustained leadership matters
  - resourcing matters
  - critical pedagogies need support



### Conclusion: *Final reflections*

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- Youthreach and alternative settings demonstrate that GCE can be:
  - relational
  - critical
  - experiential
  - learner-centred
  - transformative
- Global themes become most meaningful when connected to learners' lived realities. In this sense, Youthreach and alternative education settings may provide important insights into the kinds of relational, critical and participatory pedagogies needed to respond to today's interconnected global crises.



## 4 Presentation by Katie Chapple

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ISSUE **42**  
PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSES TO THE META CRISIS: THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION  
Spring 2026  
*Katie Chapple and Joanne O'Flaherty*

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Thank you for listening

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter



### Camp Saoirse

#### Direct Action as Radical Pedagogy

Policy and Practice Seminar 27 May 2026 Dr Gertrude Cotter, School of Education UCC

## Case Study & Global Context: Camp Saoirse



Direct action encompasses a broad range of activities aimed at achieving social, political, or environmental change. It is characterised by the use of immediate and sometimes disruptive tactics designed to bring about change directly, particularly when conventional approaches such as lobbying, negotiation, or legal processes are viewed as inadequate, ineffective, or too slow to respond to urgent injustice.

- Camp Saoirse was a six-week student encampment at UCC during Israel's genocide on Gaza. Along with many around Ireland and the world. Summer of 2024
- The article/presentation is anchored in the experiences of the students who took part in the encampment in support of Palestine, amidst the ongoing destruction of Palestinian people, life and infrastructure by the state of Israel.
- Drawn from the work carried out for Educational Resource Liberated Zone

<https://praxisucc.ie/resources/liberated-zone-palestine/>

# 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

## What Students Wanted to Achieve



Document of UCC BDS group. Available at <a href="https://www.instagram.com/uccbds"/>https://www.instagram.com/uccbds/</a>

The students at Camp Saoirse were seeking far more than a symbolic statement of concern from the university. Their demands centred on justice, accountability, transparency, and institutional responsibility in relation to Gaza and Palestine. They wanted UCC to:

- **Divest from companies linked to the Israeli occupation and military actions**, including both Israeli and non-Israeli corporations profiting from the occupation of Palestine.
- **Open the university's financial and research relationships to scrutiny**, particularly the links connected to the Tyndall Institute and partnerships with Israeli institutions and companies.
- **Publicly acknowledge the urgency and gravity of the situation in Gaza**, which many students and international human rights organisations described as genocide.
- **Move beyond symbolic gestures** by providing:
  - clear timelines,
  - achievable milestones,
  - transparent processes,
  - and meaningful accountability measures.
- **Support Palestinian students and scholars**, including reparative funding and solidarity initiatives.
- **Challenge "business as usual" relationships** with institutions and corporations connected to systems of oppression and militarism.
- More broadly, the encampment reflected a belief that universities are not politically neutral spaces. Students were questioning:
  - what ethical responsibility universities hold in times of mass violence,
  - whether institutions should profit from or collaborate with oppressive systems,
  - and what it means for higher education to genuinely align itself with justice and human rights.

The encampment therefore became not only a protest against specific institutional links, but also a wider challenge to the political, ethical, and educational role of the university itself.



## The Quad Became a Classroom

- Students lived, debated, organised, negotiated, cooked, planned, mourned, resisted.
- Teach-ins, film screenings, public art, discussions, negotiations with management, wellbeing structures, and democratic assemblies all became forms of learning.
- Learning was intellectual, emotional, embodied, relational, and political.

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

**Core Question: can direct action function as a form of radical and transformative education within Critical Global Justice Education (CGJE)?**  
**Exploration of Encampment as a living pedagogical space**

- What happens when the university quad becomes a site of democratic struggle, care, conflict, reflection, and action?
- What counts as education in a time of crisis?

**It poses questions of higher education:**

- Are universities adequately preparing students for democratic life and social transformation - or did many students learn more about justice, power, and humanity in six weeks at Camp Saoirse than in years inside classrooms? Or both?
- Can radical pedagogy exist within increasingly managerial and depoliticised universities?
- What happens when students move from analysing injustice... to resisting it?
- And are universities prepared for forms of learning they cannot fully control?



**It argues that ...**

- If transformative education is about critical consciousness, democratic participation, ethical engagement, solidarity, discomfort, and collective action...then the encampment may have represented one of the most powerful learning spaces many students had ever experienced.
- Students were not simulating 'citizenship' or justice through classroom exercises. They were living its tensions in real time: negotiating conflict, confronting power, practising care, managing burnout, making ethical decisions, and taking political risks.



UCC Campus

**uccsocialistsoc** 493 masks laid out in honour of the 493 healthcare workers killed in Gaza since 8 October 2023. Powerful words from Irish healthcare workers and medical students on the panel tonight. UCC must divest before the graduation ceremony of medical workers this Friday 31 May!  
17w

**edfitzworld** Well done. Ye are phenomenal.  
17w 2 likes Reply

**edeltully** solidarity 🇵🇸  
17w 1 like Reply

**irishnursesmidwives4peace** Devastating. Thank you ❤️  
17w Reply

**socialrightsireland** Solidarity to you all! Your courage, leadership and integrity will go down in history.  
17w 2 likes Reply

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter



Graphic credit: Dr Rene Gonzales

### Theoretical Influences

- Paulo Freire - praxis and critical consciousness
- bell hooks - engaged pedagogy and education as freedom
- Giroux - public pedagogy and civic courage
- Boler & Zembylas - pedagogy of discomfort
- Harney & Moten - fugitive learning
- Radical hope - Lear and hooks



### Direct Action as Pedagogy


The article positions direct action as a form of Critical Global Justice Education (CGJE).

Freire's praxis becomes lived experience: reflection + action + transformation.

Students did not simply study injustice. They organised against it. They taught it.

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

# Methodology and Positionality



- The article emerged organically alongside the encampment rather than through a pre-designed research project. I worked with students on an educational resource and this article emerged from that work. As the occupation unfolded, different students expressed interest in documenting and reflecting on the experience pedagogically.
- The research drew on:
  - semi-structured interviews and conversations with students
  - written student reflections and testimonies
  - observational field notes
  - repeated visits to the encampment site
  - public materials produced during the occupation (statements, posters, social media, creative protest actions)

I occupied a dual position:

- as a supportive staff member
- and as a reflective researcher interested in direct action as pedagogy within Critical Global Justice Education (CGJE)

Ethical considerations evolved carefully throughout the process:

- one student consulted participants involved in the encampment regarding permission for their experiences to be included
- all students who contributed directly to the research gave informed consent
- pseudonyms and anonymisation were used where appropriate given the politically sensitive context

The research does not claim neutrality or detached observation. Instead, it adopts a reflexive and relational approach, recognising that knowledge emerged through dialogue, trust.

## What are we learning? It Was Messy, Difficult, Wet!

The article deliberately avoids romanticising activism.

Students confronted exhaustion, disagreement, ego, hierarchy, uncertainty, and strategic tension.

Yet this became one of the most powerful sites of learning.

*"The meetings were not always straightforward... but we took time to make sure everyone was heard."*



## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

### Students Began Questioning Power Everywhere

- Not only institutional power.
- Also power inside the movement itself.
- Students reflected critically on informal authority, leadership, and horizontal organising.
- This reflexivity is central to transformative education.

*"I did fall into some kind of false authority logic."*

Core case study: BDS student encampment at UCC



### A Pedagogy of Discomfort

Students confronted grief, fear, anger, burnout, uncertainty, and moral responsibility.

The article draws on Boler and Zembylas to argue that discomfort itself became educational.

Transformation occurred not despite difficulty, but through it.

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

### What were students learning/living/teaching? A. Democracy ?, Leadership, and Collective Action

Democracy (?) is not abstract or tidy. It is emotional, time-consuming, frustrating, relational, and deeply human.

Through daily assemblies, negotiations, and disagreements, students learned:

- how to facilitate collective decision-making
- how to navigate conflict and disagreement
- how power reappears even in "horizontal" spaces
- how leadership and ego can operate differently
- how to negotiate strategy under pressure
- how to move from observer → participant → organiser



#### Student reflections:

"Trying to let everyone say their piece... was frustrating at times, but I often came away glad because every point worth considering was discussed."

"There is a difference between those who are true leaders and those who are ego-centered."

### What students were learning Solidarity, Care, Burnout, and Political Hope

Students also learned dimensions of education not always centred within universities:

- ✓ collective care
- ✓ emotional resilience
- ✓ solidarity
- ✓ strategic thinking
- ✓ negotiation
- ✓ risk management
- ✓ legal awareness
- ✓ creativity in resistance
- ✓ self-critique and reflexivity



Figure 11. The weather did not save the camp well. It rained day and night for weeks (LCC - 08 Instagram).

The camp developed:

- ✓ wellbeing officers
- ✓ burnout rosters
- ✓ tea spaces and shared meals
- ✓ creative protests and public pedagogy
- ✓ legal support structures
- ✓ collective reflection processes
- ✓ Students learned that sustaining justice work requires care as much as critique.

#### Student reflections:

"It was the first time I truly understood what solidarity feels like."

"The encampment was sustained by people bringing food, supplies, and emotional support."  
"We had to learn how to keep each other going."

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

### The article challenges universities to rethink:

- What counts as legitimate learning?
- Where learning happens
- Who produces knowledge
- The relationship between education and justice
- Whether universities can remain 'neutral' in contexts of mass violence





## Global Movements as Learning Spaces

Camp Saoirse is situated within wider radical traditions:

- #FeesMustFall
- Climate strikes
- Anti-apartheid divestment movements
- Palestine solidarity encampments globally

These movements are not interruptions to education. They are educational movements.

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

### **Critical Global Justice Education cannot remain abstract.**

If education is about justice, democracy, solidarity, and transformation... then students acting collectively against injustice may represent some of the deepest forms of learning universities can produce.



### **Final Reflection**

Camp Saoirse reveals what education can become when students refuse passivity.

The encampment blurred the boundaries between:

- theory and practice
- learning and action
- intellect and emotion
- university and society

It asks whether universities are willing to learn from their students.

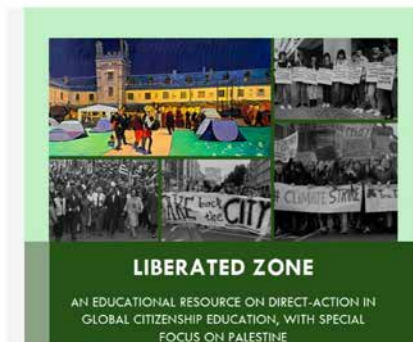
*Education becomes a practice of freedom when learners actively participate in transforming their world. Freire*

**Thank You!**

## 5 Presentation by Gertrude Cotter

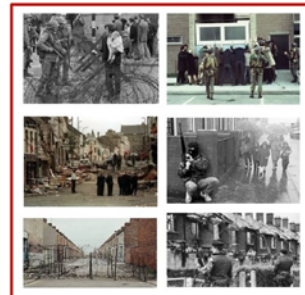


<https://praxisucc.ie/resources/liberated-zone-palestine/>



### Questions

- Can direct action be recognised as legitimate pedagogy?
- What are universities afraid of when students organise?
- Can Global Justice Education remain neutral?
- What would it mean to truly educate for radical transformation?



## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

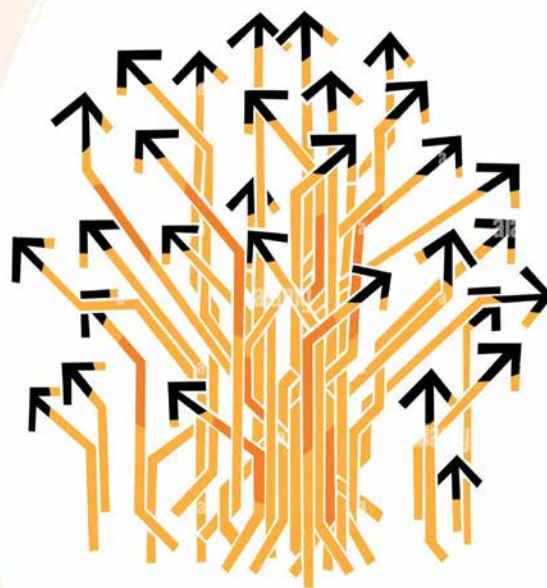


# FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE FIRST YEAR OF PRIMARY TEACHING DURING TIMES OF CRISIS

*Brigid Golden, Jenny Gannon, Benjamin Mallon, and  
Fiachra Kennedy*

## Context: Changing times

- Initial Teacher Education Policy
- Primary Curriculum
  
- Shifting global challenges
  - Climate change
  - War and conflict
  - Racism
  - Rising geo-political tensions
  - and more...



## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

### GCE as a pathway to:

- Navigate uncertainty
- Imagine alternatives
- Build skills such as empathy, resilience, criticality



### Impact of GCE in ITE

The most significant factors teachers perceived to influence (for better and for worse) GCE in their classrooms included the **curriculum, school ethos, societal issues, and time constraints.**

(Dillon and O'Shea, 2009)

## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

### GCE Practice in Primary Schools

- Practice-aspiration gap
- Motivation for engaging with GCE strongly connected with diversity in schools.

(Barry et al., 2025)

### Research Gap

Despite sustained efforts to integrate GCE into teacher education, little empirical evidence exists on its impact beyond graduation.

Sustained efforts = The DICE Project has supported the embedding of GCE into primary ITE in Ireland for over 20 years.

## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

### Study focus - 4 Newly Qualified Teachers:

(1) **experiences** of specialising in GCE during their B.Ed. degree,

(2) **perceptions** of how this specialisation influenced their teaching practice and professional identity

(3) **opportunities and constraints** encountered when embedding GCE in primary classrooms as NQTs.

### Methodology

- Semi-structured interviews
- Reflective thematic analysis

*With only four participants, the study offers in-depth insights into participants' lived experiences but is limited in its ability to capture the full diversity of experiences in the broader NQT population in Ireland. As such, the study should be interpreted as an exploratory response to an identified research gap.*

## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

Findings themes

- Identity
- ITE impact
- Children
- Integration

Identity

GCE became core to:

- Pedagogy
- Teacher identity
- Personal worldview

*"It's at the core of my pedagogy in the way I kind of take every lesson"*

*"I think even now just with the knowledge I have from GCE and like from the specialism, I just feel like I'm way more informed"*

## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

### ITE Impact

Initial Teacher Education builds:

- Confidence
- Skills
- Willingness to sit with discomfort, ask questions, and engage with complex issues

ITE experiences were an opportunity to learn that *"it isn't as scary as you think it is"*

*"I definitely felt out of my comfort zone and that's OK, that's a natural part of teaching global ed"*

### Children

Children were considered:

- Diverse
- Agentic
- Passionate
- Engaged
- Knowledgeable
- Curious
- Ethical
- Capable of engaging with injustice

*"We should be giving kids more credit for the way that they think"*

*"It's amazing how much kids know and that they can see injustice before you even name it sometimes"*

## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

### Integration

GCE was embedded across curriculum and in everyday discussions.

Curriculum was experienced as both flexible and restrictive.

*"GCE is in every subject that I'm teaching. I'm really trying to find the root causes or how they can act on their knowledge that they have learned"*

*"A lot of the times I had meaningful conversation it was actually without me planning that"*

*"the curriculum actually supported me a lot more than I would have thought. I think Global Ed also enhances the curriculum by making things more interesting, like it goes both ways"*

### Tensions: Policy vs Practice

#### Supports:

- ITE
- Curriculum flexibility
- School diversity

#### Constraints:

- Time
- Overloaded curriculum
- School culture

## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

### Key Influences

Practice shaped by:

1. Children

2. Curriculum

3. School culture

4. Global context

### Teaching in Crisis

Teachers navigate:

- Emotional responses
- Sensitive topics
- Ethical decisions

## 6 Presentation by Brigid Golden

| Implications |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Embed        | Embed <i>GCE</i> across teaching    |
| Model        | Model and use participatory methods |
| Address      | Address global issues directly      |
| Build        | Build teacher confidence            |

## Conclusions



*GCE* specialisation => personal and professional development



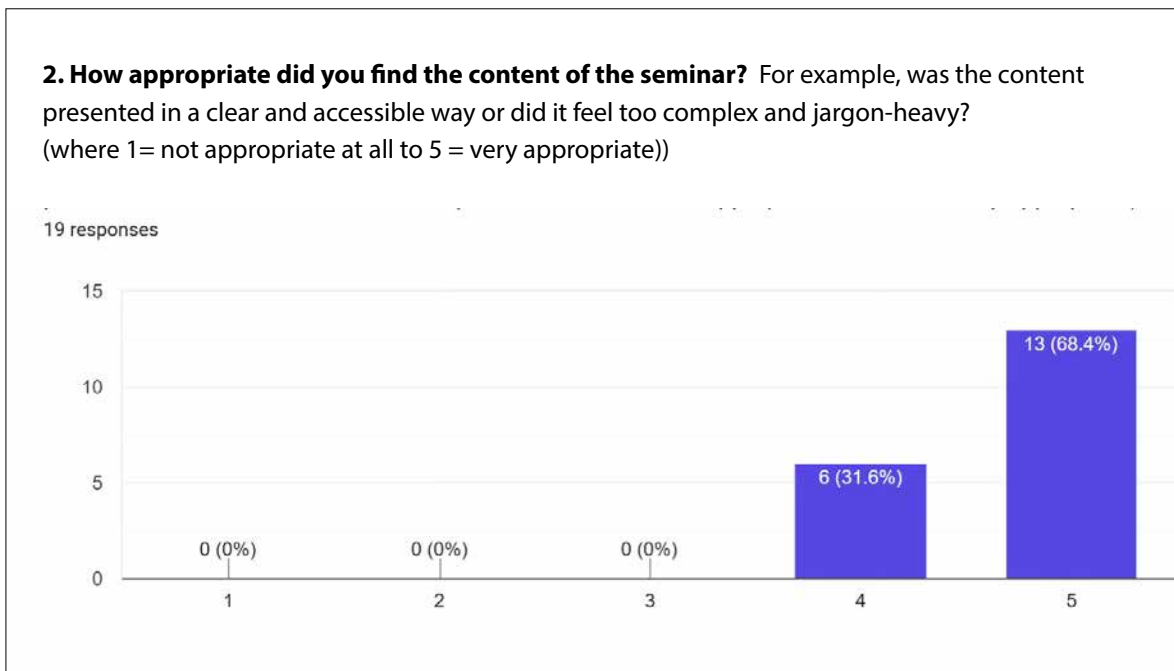
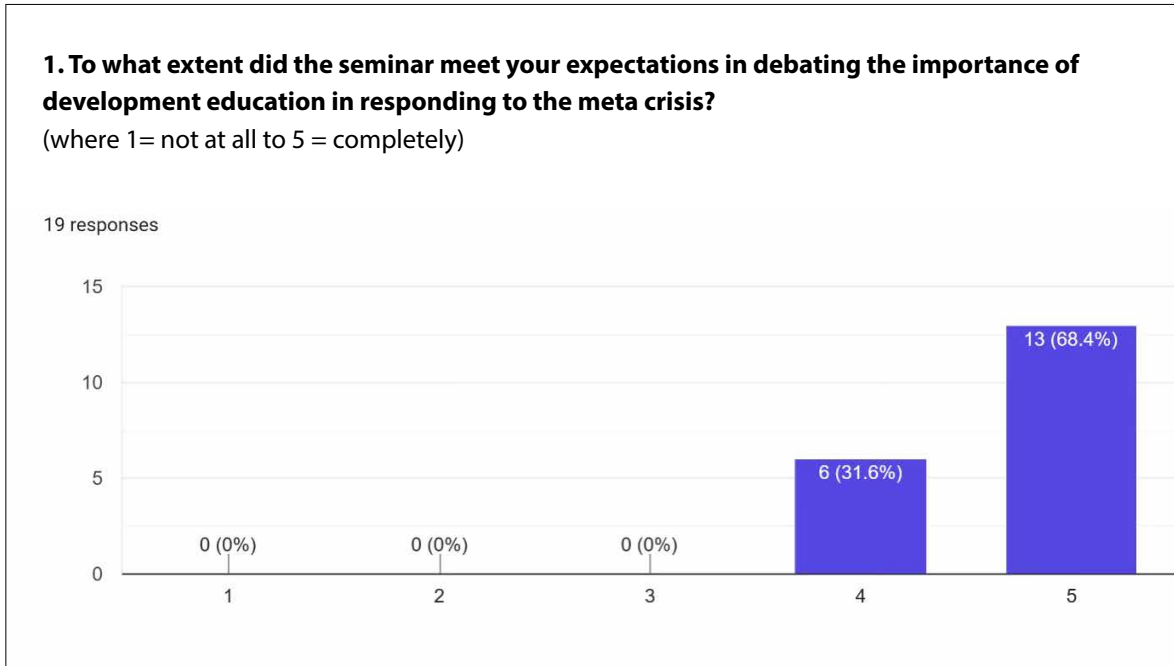
Key skills for teachers needed in times of crisis - adaptability, responsiveness, empathy



Learning for ITE - significance of modelling active, participatory methodologies, critical thinking, empathy, adaptability - and providing placement opportunities

## 7 Seminar Feedback

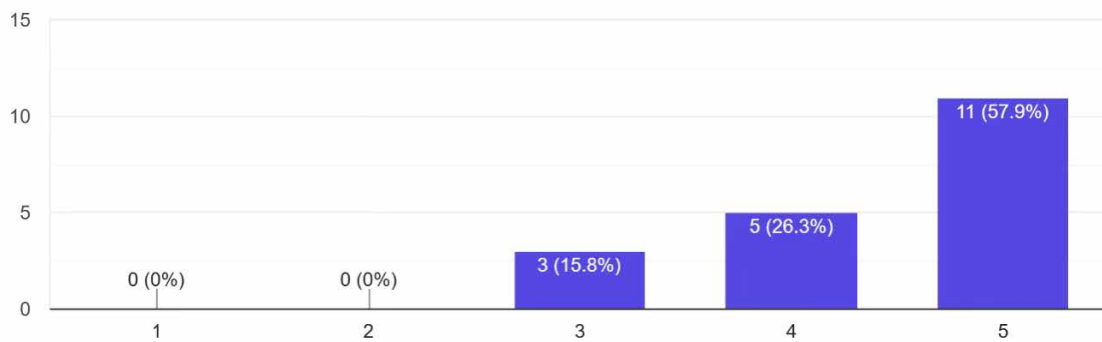
A total of 19 participants completed the seminar evaluation survey below representing a 52% response rate.



## 7 Seminar Feedback

**3. To what extent did the seminar increase your knowledge and understanding of pedagogical responses to the meta crisis?** (where 1= little increase to 5 = increased substantially)

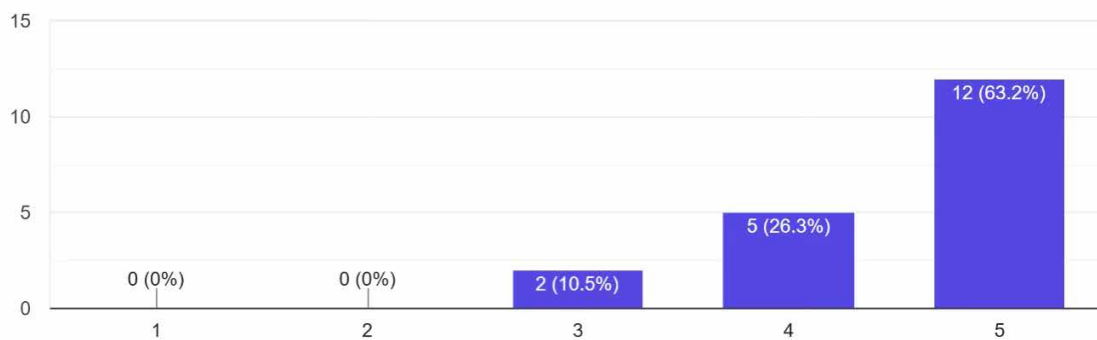
19 responses



**4. How likely are you to apply the learning from the seminar in your own practice?**

(where 1= unlikely to 5 = extremely likely) 19 responses

19 responses



## 7 Seminar Feedback

### 5. What further support or interventions would you like to see provided by CGE / Comhlámh on this topic and/or related topics?

*"It's such a huge and complex area - i would appreciate an ongoing series to address this theme further, esp re connecting lived experience of injustice with global injustice, moving from empathy to solidarity, from local solidarity and justice to global solidarity and justice."*

*"More of the same type of seminar to a wider audience."*

*"More time."*

*"I thought there were great presentations, I would just like to see a list of call to actions (CTAs) given to the learners at the end of lessons. If the learner wants to understand how they can apply their new knowledge and put it into practice at an individual and local scale, they could review a list of CTAs and see the options that they feel comfortable to do in their everyday lives. For instance, they can learn how to write a letter to their local politicians about issues that concerns them in their local area, they can email retailers about how they can become more sustainable and they can make selective shopping decisions by avoiding the brands that are funding inhumane practices when they are sustainable and affordable alternatives available."*

*"How to ensure more systemic thinking in the sector so that we have more capacity as a sector to tackle the meta crisis. Perhaps training on how to think and act systemically."*

*"Engage with international perspectives and invite speakers from those contexts."*

*"The webinar was really informative and interesting. I would love to see how GCE has impacted development in education and in the youth sector for developing countries in more depth, however."*

*"Research that maps potential synergies and collaborations between organisations rather than overlap, leading to better impact."*

*"More webinars with opportunity for discussion of topics in break out rooms."*

*"There is far more to hear and say on this topic, so I'm hoping to hear more."*

### 6. Please add any further comments or thoughts you have on this session here:

*"It was extremely informative and interesting."*

*"All good. Another excellent session. Thanks."*

*"Many thanks for the excellent session - great speakers, and it raised some very important questions for our practice and approaches with a range of learners."*

## 7 Seminar Feedback

*"Thanks to the organisers."*

*"Include inputs related to early childhood at national, European and international levels. Some of Dr. Golden's points resonated with work in this space, so too did Katie's. However there is more nuance related to the pedagogical approaches to take with young children when engaging them with GCE topics. A little more emphasis too related to Development Education being an educational process which introduces learners to global issues would be nice to focus on too. I think one question kind of touched on the area but the participants response didn't seem to really pin point it as such, or maybe it was fleshed out a bit more at the very start of the webinar. I was about 10mins late joining because I was on Trócaire call that ran over, so apologies if I did miss that point. Thanks again for today, very informative."*

*"Very informative - thank you."*

*"Really enjoyed the session. As always it would be great to have more time, but the lunchtime format is really accessible so can see why it needs to be shortish."*



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