Global Citizenship Education in English Language Secondary School Classrooms:
A Case Study of Teacher Perspectives and Implementation in Daegu, South Korea

DISSERTATION
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ABSTRACT

This study examines how secondary English teachers in Daegu, South Korea perceive and implement global citizenship education (GCE) and identifies implementation challenges. Although GCE has been promoted in national education policy as essential to global preparedness, teachers face significant complications. Prior GCE research is almost exclusively in Seoul, therefore, this research hopes to highlight overlooked regional differences. This research involved semi-structured interviews with seven English teachers in Daegu's secondary schools and was analyzed through systematic thematic methods to examine teacher perceptions, implementation practices and the effect of contextual elements.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers took a "soft" GCE approach that focused on student's individual benefits and cultural awareness rather than critical engagement with global issues. Additionally, the main challenges affecting their implementation of GCE was lack of formal GCE training, rigid pre-determined curricula, institutional constraints owing to Korea's examination-focused culture, and teacher avoidance of controversial global topics. Overall, the pedagogy and support systems in place for effective GCE implementation in cities outside of just Seoul in Korea needs to be reconsidered as a significant gap exists between the national policy goals for GCE and the classroom realities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APCEIU	Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
HS	High School
IB	International Baccalaureate
MS	Middle School
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WEF	World Education Forum

INTRODUCTION

Global citizenship education (GCE) has quickly become the primary educational tool as we continue to move towards increased globalization and interconnectivity. Economic exchanges, the advancement of digital media and the internet has no doubt opened the global public to accepting diverse cultures, ideas and the possibilities of new futures. In the midst of this, education systems around the world have recognized the definite importance of preparing students to navigate this new world, where simply learning what we've always known will not work anymore (OECD, 2018). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines GCE as an educational approach that "aims to empower learners to engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant inclusive, secure and sustainable world" (UNESCO, 2014, p.15). Similarly, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) further explains global competence in global citizenship as "the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development" (OECD, 2018, p. 7).

2025 marks a decade since South Korea's role as host to the World Education Forum (WEF) in Incheon where world leaders gathered to reflect on the 2000 Dakar Framework, shifting global focus of education from universal access to a more comprehensive agenda, the Education 2030: Incheon Declaration, highlighting equity, quality, sustainability and global citizenship (UNESCO, 2015a). In her address at the WEF in 2015, then South Korean (henceforth referred to as Korea) President, Park Geun-Hye, cemented the country's dedication to spreading the new education agenda both nationally and internationally amongst students in order to raise future global citizens who are able to live together while

understanding and respecting their differences through global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2015b). In Korea, the move to integrate GCE into the national curriculum is a significant development in the country's educational policy. The country's shift from an aid-recipient nation to a donor country in 2010 and its continued push to position itself as a key player in advancing global development agendas has been instrumental in its identity shift from to a global leader, one that prioritizes promoting a global mindset socially and politically (OECD, 2021; ODA Korea, 2023). Since the WEF 2015, the Korea Ministry of Education has developed its National Curriculum framework to reflect their GCE promotion initiatives by emphasizing the need to transform education for developing creative and talented individuals who will lead a knowledge-based society by fostering six key competencies, including civic competency. This framework further positions global citizenship as an essential component for developing citizens capable of addressing complex global challenges (Ministry of Education, 2018).

While the primary conversation around GCE has been tailoring classes and subject material to include global perspectives and challenges, another important conversation has emerged regarding communication and language. In the non-English speaking world, the realization that simply understanding issues without the correct tools to discuss them has become equally important. English as a global language, and therefore English classes as a vital area of investment for global education systems is inseparable from global citizenship education (King, 2018). In Korea, the role of English language education as a vehicle for GCE has a particular importance as English proficiency is highly valued and English classes often play a double role in also providing cross-cultural learning opportunities and a space to interact with foreigners in a particularly homogenous country (Kim, 2015).

Despite the educational curriculum in Korea being controlled at a national level, the promotion and implementation varies greatly depending on the population, local educational

priorities and of course local education boards. Large metropolitan areas, in particular the capital, Seoul, have been the primary focus of numerous past studies on GCE implementation in Korea. Consequently, there has been less attention on how GCE plays out in day to day operations in cities outside Seoul, much less in non-metropolitan areas of Korea (Kim, 2023). Daegu, the fourth-largest city in Korea, has a distinct regional identity and educational culture, making it a valuable context for examining how GCE may be understood and implemented outside the capital. This study aims to explore how secondary school English teachers in Daegu, South Korea perceive and implement global citizenship education. Specifically, this research addresses two main questions:

1. How do secondary school English teachers in Daegu, South Korea **perceive and understand** GCE within **their educational context**?

   a. How do teachers evaluate the importance of GCE in preparing students for their future roles in a globalized world?

   b. How do they define GCE?

   c. How does their educational context shape their perception and understanding of GCE?

2. How do these teachers **implement** GCE in their classroom practices?

   a. How does their perception and understanding shape the implementation of GCE in their classrooms?

   b. How does the English classroom context shape GCE content, themes, and pedagogical approaches teachers prioritize in their classrooms?

   c. How do teachers modify and contextualize GCE materials to align with Korean educational culture and their students' needs?

   d. How are they supported in their delivery of GCE through training, curriculum resources, and institutional backing?

This research will contribute to growing literature on GCE implementation by providing insights through a less studied Korean context. By focusing on English language teachers in Daegu, this study will further explore the connection between language education and global citizenship development, specifically highlighting the opportunities and challenges that English teachers face in GCE. The findings of this paper have potential implications for teacher training, curriculum development and educational policy in South Korea, as well as in other countries where there are active efforts to promote GCE in different regions. This research draws on the researcher's background as a former Fulbright scholar and full-time EFL teacher in Daegu middle schools, providing unique insights into the daily operations and cultural contexts that shape GCE implementation in Korean educational settings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Educational System in South Korea

The South Korean education system, similar to most education systems around the world, is divided into three major levels - elementary school, middle school, and high school. Elementary school in the Korean education system lasts six years (American equivalent of grades 1-6), middle school for three years (American equivalent of grades 7-9) and high school for three more years (American equivalent of grades 10-12). Compulsory education is available for all children through middle school with a near 100% registration rate (Kim, 2023). As the education system in Korea is highly centralized, curriculum formation, textbook approval, and implementing and rectifying educational policies on a nationwide basis lies with the Ministry of Education with the goal of providing uniformity throughout the country. These policies are carried out by provincial and municipal offices of education like the Daegu Metropolitan Office of Education and adapted to fit local needs (Kim, 2023).

A defining characteristic of the Korean education system and educational priorities in the country is its strong emphasis on academic achievement, especially student preparation for the infamous "Korean SAT" or *suneung* (Korean: 수능) exam. *Suneung* is the abbreviated term for the College Scholastic Ability Test or CSAT (Korean: 대학수학능력시험), the national university entrance exam which significantly shapes educational priorities and approaches at the secondary level (Hayes, 2022). This high stakes examination, which is especially critical for admission at the most prestigious universities in the country, has created an environment where academic preparation often takes precedence over other educational objectives, including global citizenship development (Kim, 2023).

English Education in South Korean Schools

English education holds a position of high priority in South Korean education and is viewed as a gateway to educational advancement and career success. Compulsory English instruction begins in the third year of elementary school and continues through high school (Lee et. al., 2015). English is taught 3-4 hours a week from primary schools, focusing on all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), with often a greater emphasis placed on reading and grammar in order to prepare for future exams like the *suneung* (Ministry of Education, 2015).

The English education curriculum in South Korea reflects the country's strategic goals to expand its global competitiveness by utilizing language education. The national curriculum highlights four key objectives that integrate communicative competence with broader educational goals: developing motivation and self-esteem in learning English; developing age-appropriate communicative competence that progresses from basic skills at primary and junior secondary levels to career-focused competencies at the senior high school level; developing intercultural sensitivity progressing from familiarity with other cultures at the

primary level to active promotion of Korean culture at upper levels; and developing intellectual capability from creativity in lower-level education towards more sophisticated thinking capabilities at the senior high school (Choi, 2016). This design reveals Korea's integrated vision for English language education beyond mere language learning to include cultural exchange and intellectual enrichment. The curriculum is very prescriptive, with lots of details and specifications on textbook material, vocabulary limits, grammatical structures, and correct expressions at each academic level. While this high level of standardization does wonders for policy enforcement and uniformity, it has also led to many teachers prioritizing teaching grammar-related instruction rather than the communicative use of language, effectively taking away from the original goals of the new curriculum (Choi, 2016). As many Korean teachers typically adhere to their given instructional manuals strictly, this disconnect between the desired policy objectives and the actual instruction manuals presented to them is a continued challenge in the implementation of the curriculum's vision.

Daegu

Daegu, located in the southeastern region of South Korea, is the country's fourth-largest city with a population of approximately 2.5 million registered in 2021. The city has 218 secondary schools (124 middle schools and 94 high schools), serving more than 120,000 students (Daegu Metropolitan City, 2021; KESS, 2023). Compared to Seoul and other metropolitan areas, Daegu has fewer international residents and multicultural families, with foreigners constituting approximately 1.18% of the population as of 2021 (Daegu Metropolitan City, 2021).

Figure 1: Administrative Map of South Korea, including Seoul and Daegu (CIA, 2018)

Global Citizenship Education in South Korea

The integration of GCE into South Korea's educational landscape represents a strategic national commitment that has evolved significantly over the past two decades. South Korea's engagement with GCE was substantially intensified following two pivotal international developments: the United Nations' Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012 and the World Education Forum (WEF) held in Incheon in 2015 (Cho, 2017). The nation's formal commitment was cemented when it became the fifteenth Champion Country of the GEFI in 2014, signaling its intention to prioritize global citizenship as a core educational objective (UNESCO, 2015a).

South Korea's curricular integration of GCE concepts has been methodical and progressive, beginning with the 2007 curricular reforms that embedded global citizenship and international understanding across elementary, middle, and high school curricula. The 2009

curriculum reform subsequently strengthened this approach by explicitly addressing notions of global citizenship and global community across multiple subject areas. Although GCE does not exist as a discrete subject within the Korean educational system, it has been systematically incorporated into moral education, social studies, and geography education, reflecting a transdisciplinary approach to cultivating global competencies (Cho, 2017). The South Korean Ministry of Education's strategic positioning of global citizenship education (GCE) as a key priority within its "promoting Korean education that leads the world" framework demonstrates the government's commitment to embedding global perspectives within national educational identity (Ministry of Education, 2016). Through dedicated teacher training programs, development of age-appropriate GCE models, and significant international collaboration initiatives, South Korea has transcended superficial curricular integration to position GCE as both a domestic educational imperative and a platform for asserting educational leadership on the global stage (Ministry of Education, 2016).

At the core of South Korean leadership in GCE has been institution-building aimed at supporting implementation and regional dissemination. The Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) was established in 2000 in partnership between the Government of the Republic of Korea and UNESCO as a means to promote Education for International Understanding, which is today regarded as Global Citizenship Education (Kim, 2023). With its offices in Seoul, APCEIU has made South Korea a regional hub for research, policy-making, and capacity development on GCE in the Asia-Pacific.

However, research reveals significant complexities in the translation from policy to practice. Studies indicate that after the 2015 WEF, GCE-related policy emerged in Korean formal education with heavy dependence on UNESCO and APCEIU. Without local translation of context, these international voices easily dominated policy implementation (Lee, 2022). Such a top-down approach has created issues of implementation, particularly

because qualitative investigations on GCE have been predominantly dominated by Western-centric paradigms and are typically devoid of comprehensive strategies that both bring together the policy makers and the practitioners (Kim, 2023).

Prior studies that question implementation at the regional level have identified striking variation in how GCE appears across various Korean contexts. Research suggests that tourist and humanitarian understandings of GCE predominate regional-level policy and school practice at the expense of critical approaches (Kim, 2023), even towards a soft strategy rather than a critical approach to global power relations. The concern regarding the preservation of national identities and traditions in a time of increasing diversity makes the discourse of global citizenship particularly problematic for societies such as South Korea (Hou, 2020).

Despite these implementation challenges, South Korea's continued devotion to GCE is a significant shift in educational focus. However, research indicates that even as the imperative GCE increases, GCE has not been extensively embedded in the national curriculum, and pedagogic strategy development has been limited (Noh, 2020). Research uncovers a paradox between policy intention and practice wherein schools are under pressure to bridge economic competitiveness with building socially conscious global citizens (Gerstner, Lim, & Abura, 2024). The policy ambition-practical constraint tension provides the complex context under which regional teachers must peripherally identify and carry out their conception of global citizenship education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Citizenship Education: Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical context of global citizenship education is defined by diverse conceptualizations that reflect different philosophical positions and agendas in education.

Oxley and Morris (2013) have developed a rich typology that distinguishes between two major categories of global citizenship: cosmopolitan-based and advocacy-based approaches. Cosmopolitan-based global citizenship tends to prioritize universal perspectives such as emphasizing democratic values and promoting faith in international institutions to address global challenges such as poverty and climate change. Understanding based on cosmopolitan global citizenship contains four diverse conceptions - political, moral, economic and cultural (Oxley & Morris, 2013).

Advocacy-based global citizenship on the other hand tends to require a more critical and action-oriented style. It also contains four of its own conceptions - social, critical, environmental and spiritual. Social citizenship prioritizes ideas such as global civic society and "voice of the people" advocacy. Critical citizenship focuses on topics like inequality and oppression while also critiquing the way power relations and economic agendas exacerbate these issues. Environmental citizenship advocates lobbying for the environment's sustainability. Finally, spiritual citizenship prioritizes human relations on the basis of spiritual aspects. This typology framework provides analytical tools for the understanding of how different environments place importance on different aspects of global citizenship education. These different orientations also have significant implications for the ways teachers conceptualize their work and select pedagogies in implementing GCE (Oxley & Morris, 2013).

Veugelers (2011) distinguished three forms of global citizenship: open global citizenship, based on knowledge of other cultures and openness to other cultures; moral global citizenship in support of human growth, humankind, and concern with the global world; and social-political global citizenship, which emphasizes unequal power dynamics and tends toward social justice and political transformation (Veugelers, 2011). They are organized hierarchically and are a neoliberal mix of cultural diversity with market economy for open

global citizenship and the fight against inequality and a more equal society for all human beings in the instance of social-political global citizenship (Veugelers, 2011).

This hierarchical perspective aligns with conflicts between what scholars have referred to as 'soft' and "critical" traditions of global citizenship education. Andreotti (2006) talks about how critical global citizenship can be an effective resource for involving learners in critical examination of an uneasy web of cultural and material processes and contexts locally and transnationally. While soft methodologies focus on cultural tolerance and consciousness, critical methodologies urge learners to learn about global power relations and inequality structures and critique existing systems rather than raising awareness (Andreotti, 2006).

The intellectual growth of GCE reflects broader changes in education ideology, away from older transmission models of knowledge towards more innovative forms emphasizing critical thinking, social responsibility, and active learning reactions to global challenges. This uncertainty brings both promise and difficulty for teachers wishing to transplant global citizenship notions into practice, particularly in the challenge of taking international examples and adapting them into local educational cultures and priorities.

Teacher Conceptualization of Global Citizenship Education

To understand how global citizenship education works in schools, we have to start by knowing how teachers think about it. Teachers' beliefs and ideas directly affect how they teach and what students learn. Studies of Korean teachers reveal that educators' perceptions on what global citizenship education is and why it matters vary greatly.

A research study of Korean teacher training programs found four main ways that teachers think about global citizenship education. First, through neoliberal perspectives some teachers see GCE's importance as mainly an economic one. Through this lens, teachers aim

to help students to compete in the global economy and prepare for international jobs. Second, the nationalistic perspective frames GCE as a way to enhance national benefits and security, making it a way of securing Korea by building international relationships. The third perspective is a cosmopolitan one that centers on shared humanity and universal values, focusing on teaching students to sympathize with people throughout the world and value different cultures. Lastly, the critical perspective is where teachers encourage students to question unfair global structures of power and study inequality and justice systems around the world (Han, 2024).

Further research with other Korean high school teachers confirms these viewpoints. Another large-scale study used statistical analysis to group teachers into six groups based on their views of citizenship. Only 17% of teachers were "Active Citizens" who strongly supported social responsibility, global skills, and their views on active citizenship. The other teachers fall into five other categories: sociable citizens - those emphasizing conversation with people of other cultures, responsible citizens - those emphasizing social responsibility, anti-intercultural citizens - those who had a little interest in other cultures, less interested citizens - those who had little interest in citizenship overall, and anti-political citizens - those who did not talk about politics at all (Seo, 2016). These two case studies clearly demonstrate that teacher conceptualizations of global citizenship vary significantly, with implications for how GCE is understood and implemented in classrooms.

The practical manifestations of these conceptual differences are clearly shown in teaching materials and practices in the classroom. A study of Korean middle school English textbooks used Andreotti's (2006) categorization of "soft" and "critical" GCE approaches and found that most content in the middle school English textbooks prioritized "soft" GCE approaches over "critical" ones. The textbooks focused on teaching easy cultural sensitivity and tolerance but avoided discussing global inequality or power relations (Lee, 2024). This

suggests that textbooks, teachers, and classroom practice all gravitate towards more comfortable, unproblematic notions and about global citizenship that do not confront more controversial issues .

These studies collectively demonstrate that teacher understanding of GCE represents a crucial dimension for understanding implementation patterns. Teachers' definitions of global citizenship, their evaluation of its importance, and their understanding of appropriate goals fundamentally shape how GCE manifests in classroom practice. The empirical evidence from Korean contexts reveals significant variation in these conceptualizations, with most teachers gravitating toward safer, less critical approaches to global citizenship education.

Contextual Influences on Global Citizenship Education

The educational and cultural contexts within which teachers work and the situations they face have a profound impact on how they understand and teach GCE. Different schools, communities, and countries create different patterns of interpreting and practicing GCE that reflect their own local priorities.

South Korea has unique challenges when trying to implement GCE that are different from other countries. Sung's (2020) study of Korea's GCE programs shows drastic differences between what the government wants and what actually happens in schools. The study found that there are competing values between Korean nationalism and global citizenship ideas. Teachers have to navigate students and parents as well as overall systems that tend to care more about getting students in college than teaching them to be global citizens. As Sung (2020) explains, "the essential values of GCED, such as equity, respect for diversity, and critical literacy are overshadowed by contradictory educational practices, such as competitive exam-focused education and authoritarian classroom atmospheres" (p. 44).

The way Korea's government controls GCE from the top down has created many problems that make it hard for teachers to understand and use GCE. Sung's (2020) research shows that this top-down control has caused "changes in education initiatives depending on regime change, the lack of cooperation between the government and CSOs [civil society organizations], the lack of recognition of GCED in education sites" (p. 37). Also, there is a big difference between what the government says should happen and what really happens in classrooms. Teachers face real problems like "teachers' lack of time for preparing for GCED, the isolation of teachers in charge of GCED from colleague teachers, and the use of GCED as a means to enter university" (p. 39). Many educators report feeling torn between their recognition of GCE's importance and the practical necessity of preparing students for their high-stakes examinations that do not assess GCE (Sung, 2020).

The biggest problem affecting GCE in Korean schools is the focus on college entrance exams. These tests create huge pressure that makes it hard for teachers to teach about global citizenship. Sung (2020) found that even though the government has promoted GCE since 2015, "GCED remains a low priority in both governments and civil society" (p. 39). This means there isn't enough money or support for teachers to do GCE well. The focus on exams means that "GCED is frequently not perceived as something useful for high school students and teachers in preparation for highly competitive college entrance exams" (p. 44). This challenge of balancing national educational priorities with global education goals is not unique to Korea, as research from Nepal shows similar tensions where "discourses of social studies education are 'still very much focused on enhancing the national economic productivity and maintaining the global status of the nation-state'" (Shah & Brett, 2021, p. 92).

What gets taught in Korean GCE classes is also affected by who is teaching it. Most GCE programs are run by organizations that focus on helping poor countries. Sung's (2020)

study shows that "the majority of GCED programs conform to soft GCED, which relies on humanitarian and moral ground, with little emphasis on critical GCED" (p. 42). This means students learn about helping others but don't learn to think critically about why problems exist. These organizations "tend to focus on the interconnectedness of global world poverty and cultural diversity based on their specialty in aid and development, with less attention to other issues such as human rights, peace, and democracy" (p. 42).

Korean culture also makes GCE harder to teach. Sung (2020) points out that "the ideology of 'nationalism' is widespread and difficult to deny" (p. 43), which fights against GCE ideas. The study notes that "nationalistic discourses on global competitiveness of Korea are conflicted with the values of GCED, causing confusions among learners" (p. 43). This cultural difference makes it harder for teachers to know how to teach global citizenship in a Korean setting.

English language classes might be a good place to solve some of these problems. Norman's (2021) research shows that "the English language curriculum often already encompasses many of the themes related to GCE. Such as respecting diversity and culture, innovation and technology related to sustainability, and seeking to understand and combat global issues" (p. 346). Also, English teachers often get better training about global topics because "English language teachers often have more resources and opportunities for global training, which helps when tasked with implanting GCE into their subject" (p. 346).

Teacher training programs for English teachers show that the right support can help overcome these problems. Norman's (2021) study of teacher training found that "even one training module can lead to the successful integration of GCE by Secondary English language teachers" (p. 345). The research gives examples of teachers who successfully taught about UN goals, social justice issues, and diversity after getting just a little bit of training.

All these different factors create complicated situations for teaching GCE in Korean English classrooms. Teachers have to figure out how to balance global citizenship ideas with local school expectations while still preparing students for college entrance exams. Therefore, current research confirms that contextual factors have an important role in shaping how teachers understand their job as global citizenship educators and what they think they can actually do in their specific schools.

Implementation Practices and Pedagogical Approaches in GCE

Translating GCE from policy ideas into real classroom practice requires pedagogical approaches that can effectively bridge the gap between global concepts and realistic teaching strategies. Research around GCE implementation shows clear patterns in the ways teachers approach global citizenship education, the strategies they use, and the challenges they face when trying to create meaningful learning experiences for their students.

A 2019 analysis of GCE teacher training across multiple countries identifies three main teaching narratives that further lead to different implementation strategies (Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019). Content-based approaches focus on relaying information on international issues, cultures, and global systems by teaching facts and offering information via traditional methods of instruction. Values-based approaches focus on attitude change and moral development, striving to create empathy, respect for diversity, and commitment to human rights through thinking- and activity-based exercises. Competence-based approaches focus on skill development for practical application, with an emphasis on critical thinking, communication, and action-oriented conversation around world problems (Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019). These three pedagogical narratives offer a framework to understand how different teachers think about their work in creating global citizenship, with each approach describing different ideas about learning purposes and effective teaching methods.

The intersection of language education and GCE implementation offers unique opportunities and challenges that require special teaching considerations. Research specifically looking into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms illustrate how language teachers can optimize these settings for global citizenship development using structured teaching models. A 2021 study looking at GCE integration in EFL contexts shows a tri-domain framework that groups GCE competences into heart (socio-emotional), head (cognitive), and hand (behavioural) domains. These three categories serve as a framework for studying the intersection of English teachers' global citizenship goals and language learning goals (Lourenço & Simões, 2021). The heart domain encompasses empathy, valuing diversity, and identity development, enabling students to engage emotionally with global issues and diverse opinions. The head domain focuses on critical thinking, media literacy, and communication skills, developing cognitive abilities in order to observe and analyze complex global challenges. Lastly, the hand domain focuses on collaboration, social responsibility, and action towards sustainability, therefore encouraging students to translate their understanding of these issues into practical engagement as a global citizen (Lourenço & Simões, 2021). This tri-domain model is very valuable in understanding how teachers juggle the dual purposes of language learning and citizenship education within limited class time and curriculum space (Lourenço & Simões, 2021). The framework recognizes that language learning and global citizenship education can support rather than substitute each other, where language proficiency becomes tools for international interaction and global content provides real life contexts to practice languages.

Research on stakeholder involvement in GCE implementation reveals how different institutional actors can determine teaching quality. These actors effectively create what is known as "contrasting cultures" in educational delivery (Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019). This constant conflict between higher education institutions, non-governmental organizations, and

practicing teachers creates tensions when discussing theoretical approaches and practical implementation needs. These contrasting cultures emerge in other pedagogical priorities, where some actors prioritize content knowledge and others transformative experience or building professional skills (Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019). Understanding these institutional dynamics is actually paramount for analyzing how individual teachers work with conflicting expectations and available resources in implementing GCE in their specific contexts.

Research about the effectiveness of different teaching practices reveals that a successful implementation of GCE has to go beyond adoption of certain teaching strategies to deeper thinking about how global insight can best be incorporated into existing educational structures. These studies suggest that effective GCE teachers generally integrate elements from multiple different pedagogical narratives and implement those that seem best to them based on content, values, and competence in ways that adapt to their specific student groups and local contexts (Lourenço & Simões, 2021, Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019). This adaptive teaching practice reflects a larger issue of proper translation of global citizenship frameworks and their practical implementation into locally relevant and culturally appropriate learning environments.

Overall, current research demonstrates that classroom practices often fall short of theoretical ideals, with educators struggling to balance the national goals towards global citizenship with practical constraints like time limitations, curriculum demands, and pressures from examinations. However, there are teaching frameworks that can provide valuable tools to understand how these challenges can be addressed through more systematic attention to the relationship between teaching methods and learning outcomes in global citizenship education (Lourenço & Simões, 2021, Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019).

Adaptation and Contextualization Strategies

Possibly the most complex challenge facing teachers and education systems worldwide when it comes to GCE implementation is finding the best way to adapt GCE to local educational contexts. Teachers need to balance global ideas with what their local community values and their school system expects. This calls on them to make thoughtful decisions in the face of many competing demands and objectives.

Research surrounding adaptation strategies in GCE show there are three main ways that schools and teachers try to apply GCE to the local population (Lloyd, 2018). The first of these is "one-size-fits-all" universalization. This occurs when global frameworks are used exactly as they are without being adapted to local requirements or culture (Lloyd, 2018). This is not very effective because the global ideas do not connect to what students' real-life experiences are on a daily basis. The second approach is called "relative global" implementation. This is when the state controls how GCE is adapted to fit the country's political agendas and makes it appear as though it is complying with international standards (Lloyd, 2018). It can adapt global concepts to serve the nation but without enabling students to critically examine power relations. The third approach is "local absolute" implementation. This puts first bottom-up adaptation that renders global issues relevant to local communities yet still connects to global themes (Lloyd, 2018).

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) brings with it some special opportunities and challenges. Since language learning is also culture learning, instructors need to be careful not to favour one culture over another (Hollenback, 2019). Research around EFL shows four paradigms for teaching English for global citizenship: the cultural capital paradigm perceives English as a tool for economic and social gain; the acculturation paradigm has the goal of approximating "native speaker" norms and Western culture; the intercultural communication paradigm focuses on skills for negotiating cultural differences and creating cross-cultural understanding; and the global citizenship paradigm uses English

learning as a vehicle for promoting justice, equity, and inclusive worldviews (Hollenback, 2019). These different approaches uncover broader questions of how GCE can maintain cultural diversity without falling into cultural imperialism or advancing dominant cultural perspectives (Hollenback, 2019). This framework shows how English teachers need to make complex decisions among treating English as a simple tool for communication, addressing issues of cultural and power in using language, or explicitly teaching social justice issues of global communication.

When teachers adapt materials, they need to juggle multiple considerations at the same time. Global citizenship education needs to be localized and contextualized to make it relevant, meaningful, and effective, and this requires resources that tackle concerns prioritized in different educational contexts (Guo-Brennan, 2023). The effectiveness of different adaptation strategies is very much dependent on institutional support, community attitudes, and teacher preparation (Lloyd, 2018). Adaptation research has shown that individual creativity in teachers, while important, needs to be in addition to systematic support for adjusting curriculum materials and teaching approaches to the context. This means that adaptation strategies cannot be boiled down to individual teacher decisions. They must be studied within broader school culture and education policy contexts that enable or limit teachers to make global citizenship concepts meaningful to their specific students.

Support Systems and Implementation Issues

The last, most important factor in successfully implementing GCE is the presence of quality support systems that help teachers learn the necessary skills they need to properly teach GCE and deal with issues that may arise. Research analyzing support systems finds that there are significant gaps between what teachers need and what support they actually get. This creates obstacles that make it hard to deliver GCE properly in schools around the world.

Teacher preparation for GCE is a critical area where support gaps are particularly visible. Comprehensive GCE pedagogical research identifies six key characteristics where focused support and growth is needed: maintaining objectivity when addressing controversial global issues, demonstrating flexibility to respond to current events and student interests, providing student choice in learning activities and assessment approaches, technology as a global networking and research tool, fostering critical thinking about complex global challenges, and creating experiential learning opportunities that connect classroom learning to real-world action (Saperstein, 2020). This study shows that not many teachers possess all of these characteristics without intentional preparation and ongoing support, yet most teacher education programs will only provide minimal training in global citizenship education practices. (Saperstein, 2020).

Several successful programs identify good practices to prepare teachers. One program is Teachers College at Columbia University partners with World Savvy and the Asia Society to offer a 15-month online Global Competence Certificate program (Saperstein, 2020). Another program is North Carolina's Global Educator Digital Badge for Teachers is an example of a state-led initiative that includes professional development hours teachers must accomplish and complete a capstone project within two years. This gives teachers a definite route to becoming certified in global competencies (Saperstein, 2020).

Analysis of institutional support mechanisms shows that there are systemic challenges in ensuring effective support for GCE implementation (Mukwacha, 2020). Research on GCE teacher training shows that institutional culture, administrative support, curriculum guidance, and resource availability are significant in influencing effectiveness in implementation (Mukwacha, 2020). Schools and districts that claimed to be concerned with global citizenship education through policy statements don't necessarily provide real support like curriculum materials, professional development, or testing guidance (Mukwacha, 2020). This gap

between policy rhetoric and practical support represents implementation issues that individual teachers must manage on their own for the most part.

Another issue is lack of uniformity amongst different regions when it comes to the level of support systems offered, which further perpetuates unequal opportunities for GCE implementation. Research in various educational contexts illustrates how conservative institutional cultures and examination-focused priorities restrict teacher agency and limit assistance to innovative pedagogy approaches (Mukwacha, 2020). Additional systemic barriers exist such as lack of administrative understanding of GCE objectives, limited professional development opportunities, insufficient curriculum material translated into local contexts, and assessment systems that fail to recognize or reward global citizen competencies (Mukwacha, 2020).

A recurring issue in all research examining systems of support for GCE is the disparity between policy in intent and in practice in the classroom (Saperstein, 2020, Mukwacha, 2020). Numerous studies demonstrate how teachers adapt, change, or accommodate GCE strategies according to their understanding of the support that is offered and institutional constraints (Mukwacha, 2020). Teachers report often feeling isolated in their efforts to implement global citizenship education, with no peer to exchange interests and information with, and with hardly any guidance on how to deal with issues that inevitably arise from engaging students with controversial or complex international issues (Saperstein, 2020).

International comparative analysis shows that effective support structures need to be integrated at several layers of schooling systems (Saperstein, 2020). Research on successful GCE implementation has identified common characteristics in the form of extended professional development beyond one-time workshops, collaborative networks where teachers may share resources and practices, administrative leadership dedicated to global

citizenship education in the form of real policy and resource commitments, and community engagement that builds broader support for global perspectives in education (Saperstein, 2020). The International Baccalaureate system is a great example of comprehensive institutional support by offering regular teacher training, ongoing professional development, curriculum resources, and assessment frameworks which provide effective GCE implementation (Saperstein, 2020).

These findings show that support systems are much more than just extra help for individual teachers. Instead, they are fundamental infrastructures which can either encourage or handicap the possibility of effective global citizenship education (Mukwacha, 2020). The evidence suggests that without systematic attention to developing comprehensive support systems, GCE implementation will remain limited to isolated individual efforts rather than becoming integrated into the broader educational systems (Saperstein, 2020, Mukwacha, 2020).

Synthesis: Toward a Comprehensive Framework

The research examined across these five areas demonstrates that global citizenship education implementation cannot be understood through examination of isolated factors. Instead, we need to look at all the parts together and understand how teacher understanding, contextual factors, pedagogical approaches, adaptation strategies, and support systems all work together and affect each other. Each area gives us important information, but they're all connected and work together to shape what GCE actually looks like in schools.

Teacher conceptualizations are like the foundation - they affect all the decisions teachers make about how to implement GCE. But what teachers think and understand is also shaped by contextual factors like cultural values, what their school thinks is important, and educational traditions. Implementation practices show both what teachers understand and

what limits their schools put on them. Adaptation strategies show how teachers actively work to balance global frameworks with local realities. Support systems either help or hurt all these processes, which shows that many different factors work together to determine if GCE implementation will be successful.

Understanding how everything connects means that if we want to study GCE implementation well, we need frameworks that can look at both individual parts and how they interact with each other. The five areas identified through this literature review give us this kind of framework. They offer a systematic approach to examining global citizenship education in specific educational contexts while recognizing the complex dynamics that shape how global citizenship concepts translate into educational practice.

Knowledge Gaps in Literature

The literature review shows that plenty of research has been conducted on global citizenship education around the world. However, there are some important knowledge gaps that still need to be filled. These gaps show why we need more specific research that looks at what teachers actually experience when they try to implement GCE in other Korean cities outside of just Seoul, especially within English classrooms.

Regional and Non-Metropolitan Gap Context

The biggest problem with current GCE research, especially those focused on Korea, is that they are more likely to study big cities, specifically Seoul, when they study Korean education. As Kim (2023) mentioned in their study, GCE implementation studies in Korea have been "predominantly dominated by Western-centric paradigms" and concentrated in large urban areas. This leaves big questions about how GCE actually plays out in smaller cities that are made up of various kinds of people, cultures, and schools. Daegu is Korea's

fourth-largest city and has its own unique identity and style of approaching education. This makes it a place that is not necessarily well-researched, and it might look at entirely different ways that teachers know and practice GCE compared to what researchers have found during their studies of schools and teachers in Seoul.

This focus on purely large or capital cities creates an actual issue in the knowledge we have surrounding GCE implementation. We don't understand enough about how factors like conservative culture, having fewer foreign nationals or international population, and different school priorities affect what teachers think and do. Although Sung (2020) talks about nationalism vs. global citizenship tensions in Korea as a whole, we don't actually know very much about how these tensions may play out differently in various Korean regions, whether it is the same conclusion or the results are different.

English Language Education and Integration Gap of GCE

While it is known by researchers that "the English language curriculum often already encompasses many of the themes related to GCE" (Norman, 2021, p. 346), there still isn't enough research carried out to understand exactly how English teachers teach language and global citizenship at the same time. Whereas Hollenback (2019) gives us theoretical frameworks for how to best conceptualize several paradigms of EFL and their relationship to global citizenship education, and Lourenço and Simões (2021) give us models of instruction for integrating EFL-GCE, there isn't enough concrete research out there that looks at how English instructors in non-Western countries actually implement these principles in the classroom.

This gap is especially pressing in Korea. English instruction in Korea does so much more than merely instruct in a different language. It also promotes cultural exchange and learning about other countries, something very essential in a country with a homogenous

population (Kim, 2015). Current research is not able to properly explain how Korean English teachers see themselves as global citizenship teachers. It is also not able to show how they try to balance English teaching with teaching global citizenship when all school activities and priorities are geared towards preparing the students for exams.

Teacher Agency and Experience Gap

Current research shows a significant divide between studies that are built on government policy and research that instead analyzes what teachers experience and how much agency they possess in implementing GCE. Research talks about the challenges of top-down implementation of GCE policy (Sung, 2020) and points out different ways in which teachers understand global citizenship (Han, 2024; Seo, 2016). But then again, there is little empirical work that really gets at how teachers actually go about negotiating, adjusting, and interpreting GCE in the specific schools and cultures in which they work.

This gap is especially clear when we look at how teachers adapt and reframe international GCE ideas to fit their own school culture and what their students actually need. While Lloyd (2018) provides educators some theoretical frameworks for understanding different ways they can adapt, there isn't enough actual research that looks at how teachers practically utilize these techniques in their everyday classrooms. This is especially true in Korean cities outside of Seoul where this may be especially challenging.

Micro-Level Implementation Gap

Current studies tend to focus on large government policy analysis or broad surveys rather than examining what actually takes place in individual classrooms. While studies show general patterns regarding how teachers conceptualize GCE (Han, 2024; Seo, 2016) and talk about implementation problems (Sung, 2020), few studies examine the specific strategies

used by teachers on an everyday basis. We also don't know enough about what teachers struggle with in their everyday teaching and how stuff such as school culture and community expectations influence what they choose to do in their classrooms.

This gap is especially relevant in research on how the interaction between teachers' beliefs and how they actually behave in class works in real schools. Research has not really examined how teachers' perception of GCE is realized in actual classroom decisions, how they adjust materials, and how they interact with students. This is especially the case when we consider all the intricate Korean high school and middle school limitations.

Support System and Professional Development Gap

Even though it is understood that there are general problems with how teachers are trained for GCE (Saperstein, 2020; Mukwacha, 2020), we truly do not know much about what specific support systems teachers in Korean cities besides Seoul have access to. We also do not know much about how teachers navigate these systems in an effort to learn more about GCE. This gap also encompasses a lack of understanding about other teachers' informal networks, team teaching with peers, and self-teaching and how these add up to developing teachers' GCE skills and knowledge when there is little formal training.

Addressing the Gaps

All these gaps together demonstrate why we need research that focuses on specific places and is based on teachers' experience when we study GCE implementation. This research needs to be grounded in in-service teachers who are working under specific regional and school constraints. This study fills these gaps by specifically looking at secondary English teachers in Daegu and exploring their real experiences of understanding and implementing GCE to their own unique teaching context. By focusing on what teachers have

to say and looking at both what they think and what they actually do, this research allows us to learn more about how global citizenship education works in reality in a different Korean school context outside of the general Seoul area that so much research has so far focused on.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses qualitative case study methodology to examine how secondary English teachers in Daegu perceive global citizenship education. Case study methodology was used since it offers a chance to study a real-life situation that is happening at present, especially when it is hard to separate the phenomenon being observed from the environment surrounding it (Yin, 2014). There are a variety of factors that affect the way in which GCE is implemented in the classroom, including what teachers think, school policy, cultural matters, and what happens in the classroom. The case study methodology exists to examine all of these matters in combination in Daegu secondary English classrooms.

Qualitative research was used because this research hopes to understand what teachers think, what they experience, and how they interpret things in their work. Qualitative research works best when you want to study how people make sense of their world and create meaning under specific circumstances (Creswell, 2007, pp. 36–41). This research provides the depth needed in order to know not just what teachers think about GCE, but also how their views are shaped by their school environment and how they shape their teaching.

The study was designed to address two primary research questions that examine both teacher perceptions and implementation practices. The first research question explores how secondary school English teachers in Daegu perceive GCE in the school environment. This includes what they think with regard to the applicability of GCE to prepare learners for the future and how much they feel they are being aided by training, curriculum materials, and

support from their institutions. The second research question looks into the manner in which these teachers apply GCE practically in their classrooms. This is done by analyzing the specific content, topics, and teaching approaches they use as well as how they modify GCE materials to cater to Korean school culture and student requirements.

Theoretical Framework for Analysis

The analytical approach used in this study utilizes a comprehensive five-category framework developed through a systematic literature review of previous research done in similar school settings. The framework uses traditional ways of analyzing GCE as well as incorporating findings related to Korean and the broader Asian school context, ensuring the analysis is both theoretically sound as well as culturally relevant.

The first category, teacher conceptualizations of GCE, looks at how participants define and understand global citizenship. This analysis draws on established frameworks for studying discourse and research studies of how Korean teachers understand citizenship. The second category, contextual influences on GCE Understanding, examines how educational, cultural, and systemic factors shape teacher perceptions, utilizing established frameworks for understanding Korean educational constraints and opportunities. The third category, implementation practices and approaches, codes and analyzes specific classroom practices through pedagogical frameworks developed specifically for GCE delivery in English language learning contexts. The fourth category is adaptation and contextualization strategies. It looks at how teachers translate global GCE concepts into making them work locally by utilizing effective analytical frameworks for understanding tensions between global education programs and local implementation needs. The fifth category is support systems and implementation challenges. This analyzes institutional support systems and implementation

challenges through tried and tested frameworks for examining teacher preparation and professional development systems.

This comprehensive analytical framework offers systematic structure for data comprehension and is grounded in tested research that occurs in similar educational contexts. It is also methodologically sound because it combines universal GCE theoretical foundations with findings validated from comparable Asian school environments. This guarantees that it is theoretically innovative yet can be applied practically in order to see how English teachers in different regions around Korea struggle with issues of implementing GCE.

Sampling Strategy

In order to answer the research questions, this study utilized purposive sampling as the primary strategy for participant selection. Purposive sampling is appropriate when researchers seek participants with substantial experience who can provide detailed, relevant information (Patton, 2015). Since this study is concerned with how English teachers in Daegu secondary schools perceive and approach GCE, purposive sampling guarantees that everyone in the study not only works in this specific context but can also provide the necessary insights into how GCE is understood and taught in their schools, regardless of their level of training or implementation experience.

Snowball sampling was used as a complementary method for finding additional participants through referrals from early contacts and professional networks. This approach was highly effective in the context of Korea's education sector, where existing professional networks and referrals assist in reaching possible subjects who would otherwise be hesitant to participate in scholarly research. The researcher's previous experience as a Fulbright scholar and full-time EFL teacher in Daegu middle schools facilitated access to participants and helped establish trust and credibility within the local educational community. Utilizing a

combination of both purposive and snowball sampling approaches was helpful in choosing and gaining access to participants with both the relevant professional experience and the willingness to engage in detailed discussion of their experience with GCE.

These participants were chosen on the basis of some selection criteria focused on making sure that they were relevant to the research issues and had adequate experience with what I was researching. Participants were required to be: currently employed as secondary English teachers in Daegu, have minimum two years teaching experience, be willing to participate in audio-recorded English interviews, and be available for 30-60 minute sessions.

The final participant group consisted of seven English teachers in secondary schools who collectively represent diverse teaching experience and learning environments in Daegu's secondary schooling. Participants' teaching experience ranged from two to twenty-five years. This provided perspectives across different career points and levels of professional development. Both middle school and high school teachers were represented in the sample, offering coverage across the entire secondary education spectrum. All participants were also employed in schools within Daegu's educational system that operated within the Korean national curriculum framework, either exclusively or as part of a broader educational program, reflecting the standard educational experience for the majority of students in the region and ensuring findings remain relevant to the predominant educational context.

Data Collection Procedures

Semi-structured interviews were the main method for data collection in this study. The research adopted this method since it allows systematic data collection coupled with adequate flexibility to explore emerging themes and follow-up questions based on participant response (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The interview protocol was developed through careful consideration of the study's research questions and theoretical framework, ensuring

comprehensive coverage of essential topics while preserving opportunities for natural conversational flow and spontaneous insights.

The interview protocol included four sections addressing different aspects of the research questions. The first section gathered background data including teaching background, grades handled, and professional development history. The second section inquired about teacher views regarding GCE including personal conceptions, perceived relevance, and primary education objectives. The third component explored classroom implementation of GCE, based on specific practices, activities, and strategies of adaptation used by participants. The fourth component addressed systems of support and implementation challenges that cover institutional support, training needs, and issues that were encountered during implementation.

Within the protocol, questions were specifically designed as open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses with room for flexibility when asking follow-up questions to suit individual participants' replies and sensitive issues arising. This design guaranteed that participants answered about their experiences in their own words while ensuring a coverage of all the topics relevant to the asked research questions.

Interviews were conducted between February and March 2025. Most were conducted face-to-face in Daegu and a few online to suit the participants' schedules and inclinations. All interviews were conducted in English because participants were English language teachers professionally comfortable communicating in English. The researcher's background as a former EFL teacher in Korean middle schools provided additional comfort and familiarity for participants during English-language interviews. The duration of interviews ranged from thirty to sixty minutes. This offered enough time for extensive deliberation without overestimating participants' professional time allocations and commitments.

<u>Ethical Considerations</u>

This research followed robust ethical requirements for human participant research. A number of steps were taken to protect participant welfare and uphold ethical practice during the research itself. All participants were put through a thorough informed consent process and received extensive briefing on significant features of the research study to ensure that they were fully informed prior to participation. Participants were given written informed consent forms where possible prior to interviews, with ample time given to read and consider.

Confidentiality and privacy protection measures were implemented rigorously throughout the research. Full confidentiality was accorded to participants with no use of real names or even possibly identifying personal information in any study reports. All interview recordings were safely stored and encrypted, with protected transcription files and secure storage procedures in place for all research documents. Participant confidentiality is protected through consistent use of pseudonyms in all research documents and publications.

Participants were specifically told they could refuse to answer any question and were encouraged to request breaks at any time they wished. Participants were specifically told they could withdraw from the study at any stage of the process without penalty or consequence. The voluntary nature of participation was frequently reaffirmed in all interactions with participants.

All interviews were audio-recorded with explicit participant consent, ensuring accurate data capture while enabling detailed subsequent analysis. Participants were made aware of recording procedures and offered choices to decline recording or request parts of interviews to be off-record. Additionally, the interview settings were deliberately selected or even chosen by the participants themselves, so they could feel at ease and interruptions could be minimized.

Data Analysis

The analytical approach employed systematic thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, specifically customized to this research's theoretical framework and research objectives. This approach uses deductive analysis using the predetermined five-category framework with inductive analysis structured to identify emergent themes that occur within each analytical category. This allows systematic coverage while being open to new insights.

The analysis process was carried out in six phases aimed at enabling a comprehensive and thorough examination of the data. The first phase involved getting familiarized with the data by reading the interview transcripts multiple times for a complete, in-depth understanding of the participants' responses and creating preliminary patterns. The second phase undertook systematic coding of the data on the basis of the five-category framework, while also keeping an open eye out for emergent themes that were not initially identified in the framework. The third phase was theme development, searching for patterns and recurring themes within each of the analytical categories. The fourth phase was theme review or systematically testing out themes identified against coded data and refining the analytical categories as needed. The fifth phase was defining themes, clearly describing the themes and how these related back to initial research questions. The sixth phase was report writing, in which analytical findings were integrated with theoretical frameworks and research questions to produce well-supported, coherent conclusions.

Each interview transcript underwent systematic analysis using the five-category framework developed through the literature review process. The first category analyzed participants' definitions of global citizenship and its perceived importance, making sure to code the responses according to the established typologies of global citizenship orientations.. The second category examined references to educational context, cultural influences, and

systemic factors on teacher perceptions using recognized frameworks for interpreting Korean educational opportunities and constraints. The third category identified specific teaching methods, activities, and approaches described by participants and grouped them according to recognized pedagogical frameworks for GCE delivery. The fourth category analyzed how the interviewees talked about adapting or contextualizing GCE content, analyzing these strategies through established frameworks for understanding local-global adaptation processes. The fifth category looked into training, material, institutional support, and implementation challenges using proven frameworks for analysis of teacher support systems and professional needs.

Multiple strategies were used to ensure analytical rigor and enhance the credibility of the findings. Systematic application entailed repeated application of the coding framework to all the interviews in order to achieve reliability and comparability of results. Multiple rounds of examination involved multiple rounds of inference of data review in order to ensure accuracy and completeness in analysis. To make sure the framework was valid, the analysis made sure to continue referencing used analytical frameworks that had been tested and proven to work in similar research situations. Rich description provided detailed documentation of analytical decision-making processes and development of themes to ensure transparency and replicability. Extensive use of direct quotes from participating teachers ensured participant points of view were reflected accurately and findings were always grounded in participant experience and knowledge.

Limitations

There are some methodological limitations to be acknowledged in this study design, though these do not diminish the significance or significance of the findings. The seven-participant sample size, though suitable for qualitative case study research design, may

limit the extent to which findings can be generalized to broader populations of English teachers in South Korea or other contexts. Nevertheless, the key aim of qualitative research is not analytical generalization to populations but rather to theoretical propositions, and so this limitation becomes less of an issue for the purposes of this study (Yin, 2014).

The use of English as the main language for the interview, while practical given the interviewees professional expertise and comfort with English communication, may have influenced the depth and nuance of some participant responses. All participants demonstrated comfortable English communication ability, while also being provided several opportunities for clarification and explanation during interviews to reduce any lingual limitations. Moreover, interviewing in English could have yielded certain advantages in stimulating extensive discussion on English language classroom practice and GCE implementation in English language classrooms.

The geographic context of the study in Daegu provides deep insight into Korean schooling environments outside of major study areas like Seoul or Busan, but may not generalize to other regional cities or rural settings within South Korea. Collecting data outside the Korean academic year had the advantage of gaining access to practicing teachers who were able to devote time and energy for the interview without being subject to seasonal academic pressures and institutional demands. However, this also limited the access to more teachers who could participate in the interviews as many were traveling and could not be bothered to participate in work related activities.

The researcher's background as a former Fulbright scholar and full-time EFL teacher in Daegu middle schools for a year provided immense strengths in understanding common practices and cultural contexts of Korean schools. The experience provided enhanced understanding of school institution dynamics, classroom environments, and instructional pressures that influence teacher experiences. But the researcher's own foreign EFL teacher

background is unique from that of Korean English teachers, who are under other systemic pressures, career ambitions, and cultural responsibilities in the Korean education system. Cross-cultural research considerations were addressed through sensitive care for possible cultural and linguistic considerations, influencing data collection and interpretation processes. While the researcher's personal experience of teaching in Korean schools provided rich insider understanding, there might still be some limitations of understanding specific experiences of Korean English teachers.

DATA AND FINDINGS

The findings of the seven in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Daegu secondary school English teachers portray a complicated situation. The teachers recognize the importance of GCE and want to support their students in becoming global citizens. However, they have several challenges that make it difficult for them to instruct GCE successfully. In this section, the two main research questions are responded to: How do Daegu English teachers view GCE in schools? And how do the teachers practice GCE in classrooms?

Overall, the teachers implemented "soft GCE" in their day to day operations in the classrooms where they prioritize learning about different cultures and general global information. But they continue to avoid meaningful questions about global concerns or serious analysis of world developments. This is because there's pressure from test preparation, reactionary school administration, and training shortages. Each part of the analysis will add to our understanding of the issues and opportunities in Daegu schools, where teachers have to balance their own belief that global citizenship is worthwhile with practical concerns like test anxiety, limited professional development opportunities, and conservative regional educational priorities.

Participant Overview

Teacher	Gender	Current Grade Levels Taught	Years of Teaching Experience	Notable Background
Teacher A	Male	Middle School (Grades 1-3)	2 years	Also worked as a private tutor for over 10 years
Teacher B	Female	Middle School (Grade 3)	3 years	Works in an IB-integrated school. 1 year of HS experience
Teacher C	Male	Middle School (Grade 3)	9 years	7 years of HS experience
Teacher D	Male	High School (Grades 1-3)	5 years	
Teacher E	Female	High School (Grade 2)	7 years	1 year of MS experience
Teacher F	Female	High School (Grades 1-3)	9 years	Substituted few months in MS
Teacher G	Female	Middle School (Grades 1-2)	25 years	Most experienced participant

Table 1: Demographic and Professional Background of Secondary English Teacher Participants

The study recruited seven English teachers in secondary schools in Daegu, South Korea, selected through purposive and snowball sampling to ensure diverse representation across school types and teaching experience levels. The participants differed in the grade levels they taught, years of teaching, and exposure to international contexts. Having this range of teachers helped understanding GCE implementation across different school settings.

The teacher participant group is composed of middle school and high school teachers. Their experience level ranged from new-to-the-job teachers with around two years of experience to very experienced teachers with more than fifteen years' experience. Some teachers had international experience acquired through travel, study abroad initiatives, or teaching at international schools. Others had the more typical Korean educational experiences

with little direct international experience. This range proved valuable in understanding how personal experiences with global contexts influence teachers' approaches to GCE implementation.

All the participants were English teachers working in the Daegu secondary schools at the time. This meant that they had a good knowledge of local education policy, curriculum requirements, and school limitations. Their experiences reflected the broader challenges facing English language education in South Korea, where teachers must balance language skill development with broader educational objectives including global citizenship development. The participants demonstrated varied levels in familiarity with GCE principles. Some of them had never formally even encountered the terminology, and others had limited exposure through professional development or international school experience.

The different backgrounds of the participants helped understanding why different career levels and educational backgrounds impact GCE perception and implementation. Younger teachers were more receptive to new approaches but lacked institutional knowledge and confidence to implement significant curricular modifications. Older teachers understood the limitations of their education system better and also had greater awareness of student needs and community expectations that shape educational delivery in Daegu's more conservative schooling environment.

Category 1: Teacher Conceptualizations of GCE

Defining Global Citizenship

When teachers were asked to define global citizenship, most focused on cultural awareness, communication skills, and basic understanding between cultures. They did not talk about deeper issues like global power structures or inequalities. When prompted to give more specific explanations of global citizenship for their students, participants consistently

talked about daily habits and skills that allow people to communicate across cultures. They did not talk about more abstract economic or political aspects of global citizenship.

Teacher G represented this stance by describing global citizenship as "being respectful to other people and understanding other cultures and diversity." The definition reveals what researchers like Oxley and Morris have been calling cultural global citizenship, where GCE focuses on the understanding and respect of different cultures but avoids more complex political or economic aspects teaching global citizenship (Oxley & Morris, 2013). Similarly, Teacher D has defined global citizenship as "someone who can communicate with people from different countries and understand their cultures." He stressed communication skills and knowledge about cultures as being the principal elements of global citizenship.

Teacher E gave a more comprehensive definition that included both cultural and ethical aspects: "A global citizen is someone who understands different cultures, shows respect for other people regardless of their background, and can communicate effectively with people from around the world." This definition aligns with ethical models of global citizenship that emphasize moral responsibility and respect for human dignity. However, it still pays more attention to the interpersonal aspect than to the wider structural characteristics of global citizenship.

The patterns of definitions amongst the teachers showed limited exposure to critical global citizenship paradigms, that would otherwise be centered on breaking down global power dynamics, economic inequalities, or systematic examination of how globalization brings about opportunities and challenges for different groups. None of the participants automatically spoke about components that would align with critical global citizenship conversations, i.e., questioning global economies, examining colonialism, or analyzing how global policies affect different communities in different ways, and so on.

Perceived Purpose and Importance

All teachers interviewed strongly agreed that GCE was very important in preparing students for an increasingly globalized world. Their motivations, however, were more about individual benefit than necessarily global collective good or transformation. The interviewees echoed repeatedly the pragmatic advantages of global citizenship development, particularly increased employment opportunities and improved cross-cultural communication skills that would serve students in their future careers.

Teacher A articulated this position by stating, "Global citizenship education is important because Korea is becoming more international, and students need to be prepared to work with people from different countries." This justification reflects what can be referred to as the more economic side of global citizenship. In this GCE plays a mainly instrumental role associated with individual economic advancement rather than greater social or political involvement with international matters.

Teacher B added to this perspective by incorporating skill development: "I think global citizenship education helps students develop cooperation skills and communications skills, especially English skills. These are important for their future success." The response reflects recognition of GCE's role in skill formation but maintains the individual focus as opposed to group focus on benefits of global citizenship participation.

Several other teachers also acknowledged moral aspects of GCE relevance, though these were still interpersonal-focused rather than structural. Teacher C explained, "Students need to learn about other cultures so they can be more understanding and less prejudiced. This makes society better." This response reflects moral orientations towards global citizenship that emphasize ethical development and prejudice reduction as desirable outcomes of GCE.

The absence of responses that recognized key analysis of global inequalities, environmental concerns, or structural factors causing global problems reflect the weak exposure to critical global citizenship paradigms amongst Korean English language teachers in the Daegu area. The removal of these models positions students not as agents of social change, but merely capable contributors to the dominant global systems.

Educational Context Influence on Conceptualizations

The interviews reveal that teachers' understanding of GCE is largely influenced by their immediate educational environment. This includes the exam-driven nature of Korean secondary education and Daegu's conservative cultural environment. These environmental factors appear to influence teachers towards GCE concepts that gear towards contemporary educational priorities. They avoid potentially inflammatory or challenging aspects of global citizenship education.

Emphasis on communication and cultural awareness in teacher definitions shows adaptation to teaching English language contexts. Such are readily integratable in current curriculum architectures without fundamental changes in pedagogy or content to be taught. This means that educational context affects not just how teachers attempt to implement GCE but also what GCE's fundamental purposes and components are perceived to be.

Teachers' hesitation to include political or critical aspects of global citizenship appears linked to a sensitivity about conservative community values and school demands. These place a priority on non-controversial educational content. This environmental influence is a significant force limiting exposure to a more transformative understanding of global citizenship that would otherwise challenge pre-existing social or economic structures.

Category 2: Contextual Factors Influencing GCE Comprehension

Pressure of Examination Systems

University entrance examination preparation emerged as the most significant factor limiting teachers' ability to develop and implement comprehensive GCE approaches. Teachers consistently reported that exam pressure fundamentally constrained their capacity to engage meaningfully with GCE concepts. Instead, they were limited to incorporating only superficial cultural content that could fit within existing test preparation frameworks without compromising the time and focus needed for academic success.

Teacher F clearly expressed this issue: "In all of Korea it is hard for GCE to have priority over other curriculum and activity. All focused on university entrance." This response shows how systemic educational priorities create situations in which exam preparation takes precedence over other educational goals, such as global citizenship development. The emphasis of the examination system on measuring standardized knowledge and skills is at odds with GCE strategies which call for critical thinking, reflection, and engagement with complex world issues. These cannot be easily tested by standardized examinations.

Teacher B then provided a more in-depth analysis of how exam pressure affects English teaching strategies in Korean secondary schools: "The system of Korean education really is focused on entrance exam for university. Even in middle school, teachers ignore the speaking and writing in English class and only focus on the listening and reading, especially reading. If students do not learn how to speak or write, they cannot be global citizens." This response further confirms how teachers are aware that this exam-focused environment brings about additional limitations in also the development of communication skills, focusing on what is assessed in the exams, rather than meaningful engagement necessary for global citizenship.

The effect of the examination system extends beyond dedicating time to establish central teaching strategies. Current pedagogical approaches focus more on imparting

knowledge rather than the cost of critical thinking or student-oriented learning approaches more suitable for GCE. Teachers described feeling compelled to focus on content that will be examined on standardized tests rather than advancing their students' knowledge through discussion, projects, or activities that will lead to having global citizenship skills as such activities require considerable amounts of class time without a direct role in examination performance.

Regional Cultural Conservatism

Daegu's more conservative environment was also another key factor that shaped teacher perceptions and application of GCE. Regional conservatism was seen by participants as bringing added constraints over what exists in Korean education in general. This was especially where matters that would challenge pre-existing values or bring in controversial issues from the outside world.

Teacher C specifically spoke about this regional influence: "It is really hard to implement in Daegu, it is very [homogeneous], especially Daegu is very conservative city." This response illustrates how regional cultural characteristics pose some implementation issues that extend beyond national education policy constraints. The emphasis on homogeneity suggests an awareness that GCE principles emphasizing diversity and multicultural engagement may encounter resistance in societies with limited exposure to cultural diversity.

Teacher A further elaborated on the impact of this conservative attitude on school agendas: "[Our] education does not recognize GCE. [They say] why do we have to be a global citizen? Too busy studying." This response captures a broader skepticism regarding global citizenship amongst educators as well as parents where they view GCE as taking away

from more important school priorities while also challenging their established cultural values and practices.

This conservative regional context tends to push instructors towards GCE practices targeting safer cultural content such as festivals, food, and customs. They avoid handling more sensitive worldwide topics that may involve political, economic, or social criticism. This contextual pressure is to blame for the soft GCE orientation observed in teacher conceptualizations and implementation practices.

Homogeneous Social Environment

One of the participants mentioned Daegu's homogeneous social environment as limiting students' exposure to diversity and hence reducing their sense of need for global citizenship development. The homogeneity complicates GCE implementation by reducing students' exposure to cultural diversity directly and limiting their sense of relevance of globalization in their daily lives.

Teacher E described this challenge further: "We don't have any network or the chances to learn the kind of thing…Even parents and even teachers, teachers, students…we don't have any interest of that [GCE] things" This response shows that homogenized environments bring cyclical effects where limited exposure to diversity lowers interest in global citizenship concepts. This in turn lowers possibilities for successful GCE application and further exposure to global perspectives. The effect of this homogenous environment has effects beyond just the educators. Parental and community support for GCE programs is also limited as many may not perceive global citizenship competences as directly relevant or necessary to their children's success. This puts additional pressure on educators to justify GCE exercises and limits institutional support for innovative approaches which may require additional resources or time allocation.

Educational System Structure

Aside from exam pressures, interviewees mentioned more overarching organizational characteristics of Korean education that constrain GCE adoption. These organizational characteristics include rigid curriculum requirements, limited teacher autonomy in topic selection, and institutionalized norms centered on conformity and standardization over innovation and critical thinking.

Teacher A also spoke about these structural constraints: "There are certain designated subjects and curriculum as well. I mean, already. And we cannot change it. It's really hard for teachers to teach anything without the permission of the school." This further reveals how the structure of the educational system restricts what teachers can actually do and creates obstacles in including GCE content that goes beyond what they're officially required to teach.

These structural limitations are especially problematic for GCE implementation because meaningful global citizenship education typically needs cross-subject connections, teaching methods that put students at the center, and discussions about current events and controversial topics. However, these approaches don't fit well with the standardized curriculum structure and conventional teaching methods that Korean secondary schools emphasize.

Category 3: Implementation Practices and Approaches

Surface-Level Cultural Content Integration

When looking at teachers' reports of actual classroom practice, they mostly show surface-level integration of cultural content. This continues to agree with the "soft" GCE orientation with emphasis on cultural awareness and no engagement with global citizenship concepts. Teachers explained incorporating cultural information about other countries and

cultures in their English classes through topics such as cultural customs, festivals, food, traditions, and general practices. These are some simple and everyday ways they easily integrate GCE content into their classes without needing significant curriculum changes.

Teacher D gave an example of their experience with GCE implementation through a cross-cultural project focused on global festivals. They explained how they introduced students to an Australian festival that involved community participation and charitable donations as a model example. Using this foundation, Teacher D guided students to research and create presentations about various festivals from different countries around the world. This is a cultural global citizenship implementation that immerses students in diversity through celebratory and noncontroversial cultural content. While this approach provides some engagement with global diversity, it remains close to surface-level cultural differences and is not interested in probing more depthful issues of cultural values, global interdependence, or critical examination of how different cultures co-exist and engage within global systems.

Teacher C used similar approaches in their class by using food-focused lessons to teach students about cultures from around the globe. Students in the lessons learn about different foods from countries like France, China, and Japan. In the lesson, students do role-plays where they introduce foreign foods from other countries to their classmates. Teacher C said that when students present these "strange" foods, their classmates generally show surprise and interest, saying something like "Wow, what is this? Oh my God!" By going through this process, students come to know that foods which look strange in Korea are regular in other regions and that they have to learn to accept differences and about other cultures. This approach is an interactive and engaging method of learning culture that calls for the participation of students and democratic classroom discussion. While this interactive nature is one of GCE's pedagogical approaches, the continued focus on yet again safe cultural

topics like food help teachers to continue avoiding potentially controversial aspects of different cultures or global issues that require high critical thinking skills.

Other interviewed teachers mirrored similar additive approaches when it came to their GCE implementation as Teacher C and Teacher D, where global content is incorporated into existing lesson templates without foundational changes to methods of teaching or learning objectives (Banks, 1999). While these approaches provide some surface level exposure to global diversity, opportunities for participation in critical thinking processes or further global citizenship obligations that would be more transformative are limited.

Limited Critical Engagement

The GCE implementation practices described by the teacher showed little engagement with the critical aspects of global citizenship that would otherwise challenge the students to learn about global power dynamics, economic inequality, environmental concerns, or other complex global issues requiring analytical thinking and moral judgment. Teachers consistently avoided topics that might be considered politically touchy or ones that would challenge the students to conduct critical analysis of existing social, economic, or political order.

In the event teachers did attempt to incorporate more substantive global content, their teachings remained focused more on information transmission rather than critical inquiry or student-driven exploration of the global issues. This pattern coincides with the previous discussions of both regional constraints and limited exposure to the necessary teaching approaches that would otherwise facilitate the critical GCE implementation in English language classrooms. The absence of critical thinking is particularly significant given the fact that English classrooms naturally provide a space for exploring global communication, media, and cultural differences while still aligning with language learning objectives.

Textbook Dependence

Interviewed teachers consistently spoke of relying heavily on textbook materials for any GCE-related content within their curriculum, signifying low teacher autonomy in class content development and little or no creative interpretation of materials to support global citizenship learning objectives. This textbook dependence constrains GCE implementation by limiting content to whatever curriculum developers consider appropriate and feasible for standardized educational delivery.

Teachers like Teacher D, when asked where his ideas for GCE content came from, simply stated that everything was, "pretty much from the textbook." Teacher F explained that GCE content that is contained in textbooks comes from the perspective of the textbook authors. She went on to explain, however, that even this limited GCE content within textbooks is not fully addressed in class. High school teachers like herself selectively pick and choose what to teach from the textbook content. This means that even though textbooks are predetermined and structured with their limited GCE material, they cannot be blamed solely for poor GCE implementation. Teachers also intentionally avoid these topics in favor of using their time to teach what is most needed for university entrance exams.

The teachers and their reliance on textbook materials shows how educators serve primarily as distributors of pre-approved content while also revealing their lack of training and confidence in being able to modify this content and its delivery within their curriculum guidelines. Overall, this textbook dependency limits GCE implementation to whatever publishers and national curriculum boards decide and leaves little to no room for locally relevant GCE.

Efforts To Use Real World Materials

Despite the heavy dependence on textbooks, some participants shared their individual attempts to incorporate material that could generate more current and relevant global content. These attempts are humble efforts towards moving beyond just the pre-determined curriculum to include more engaging and effective GCE implementation. However, despite these attempts, the teachers were overall still confined by their contextual determinants limiting comprehensive GCE approaches.

When asked about their individual attempts at GCE implementation in the classroom, Teacher B referenced their use of newspaper articles from major international news sources, demonstrating their acknowledgement of a serious need in real materials that can provide more current and relevant global perspectives compared to their textbooks. However, it is important to note that Teacher B is the only teacher who mentioned incorporating authentic news materials into their teaching. This is most probably influenced by the fact that they are the only interviewee teaching at a secondary school where the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum was integrated into their educational program, rather than a more standard Korean national school curriculum. As the IB programs centers around concepts of global awareness, critical thinking and engagement with world affairs as its core components (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2025), it likely also creates a school environment for teachers like Teacher B to feel encouraged in infusing real-world global content into their classrooms.

Teacher B's ability to not only attempt but feel confident in incorporating new and real-world materials into their curriculum because of their school's IB environment support the idea that institutional context and curriculum structure play extremely important roles in shaping whether teachers are able implement more authentic GCE practices in their classrooms. The simple fact that the other teachers have not even attempted to integrate or move beyond the "soft" GCE content already featured in their textbooks reveals the degree to

which curriculum planning and school culture actively discourages even willing teachers from incorporating GCE material in their classes.

Student-Centered Learning Limitations

When speaking to the teachers about the way in which even their limited GCE material was delivered to students, they unanimously agreed that there were not many opportunities for a more student-centered approach but rather they were delivered in a more lecture style where the teacher took center stage. While they did acknowledge that having the students discuss world issues or even small cultural differences together in smaller groups or project work would foster interesting discussions and enable them to think beyond the scope of the presented material, it just simply wasn't feasible for the class time they were allotted.

The majority of the time spent in English classrooms at the secondary level, especially within high school, was focused on learning content related to their examinations. To spend time on student-centered approaches that may not directly improve their test scores and that would require more precious classroom time was too much of an ask for them.

Student-centered learning is an essential component for successful GCE delivery. Global citizenship development requires active engagement of students with complex issues, reflection and debate time, and the development of critical analysis and moral reasoning skills, which can be better achieved with student-centered. This teacher-directed teaching approach presents yet another major challenge in effective GCE implementation in secondary English classrooms across Daegu.

Category 4: Adaptation and Contextualization Strategies

Limited Systematic Adaptation Approaches

Looking at the teachers' responses to adaptation and contextualization strategies, there seems to be minimal to no efforts being undertaken to modify any current GCE material or concepts further to enhance its relevancy within their specific Daegu education and cultural context. The teachers as a whole showcased very little level of engagement or thought into contextualization as a useful and deliberate GCE teaching strategy.

The majority of the teachers were particularly brief when asked about their thoughts and efforts in transforming GCE content more suited to the local setting with a simple, "No." Teacher D further elaborated on this point that adaptation was not a priority as classes by once again reiterating that their classes are very focused on the university entrance so going an extra step for GCE is not a priority. Teacher A also mentioned that aside from just the lack of initiative from teachers on this front, even his "students are not interested in this," suggesting teacher knowledge in regards to students finding topics related to GCE distant and irrelevant with their current educational goals too, furthering highlighting a need to then in fact contextualize GCE to fit it into their educational and personal goals.

These responses confirm the notion that teachers tend to deliver GCE content as presented in the national textbook, rather than intentionally modify the material to attract and resonate with their students. This lack of GCE adaptation initiatives represents yet another missed opportunity for enhancing the effectiveness of GCE by establishing needed relevance between global citizenship values and the students themselves.

Tourism-Based Local Connections

Possibly, the most direct adaptation strategy came from trying to connect the need for GCE to local realities for students, particularly Daegu's growing tourism industry. Teacher G provided the clearest example of this when they said, "Daegu has many foreign tourists these days. We are [mostly] local, but we need GCE manner[isms]." This particular adaptation

strategy, when trying to work with their students on language goals, attempts to connect global citizenship skills directly to students' immediate environments and potential future interactions.

This tourism-focused strategy is also a recognition that global citizenship skills are transferable to everyday life for Daegu students as their city continues to change, and not just a foreign concept that they only might have a chance of needing. However, this connection, while focusing on practical skill development, still remains focused on very surface-level interactions and language development rather than encouraging deeper engagement with global citizenship topics such as examining tourism behaviours and roles in economic systems, or other such areas.

Project-Based and Individual Initiatives

Within the classroom, the most active adaptation attempt was by Teacher B, who came up with a project where students would write an article or pamphlets about Korean festivals and Daegu events where their audience would be foreign friends. This attempt is a "local absolute" GCE orientation where the approach is to connect their global communication skills to local cultural promotion by helping students in developing skills needed to their communities for global audiences (Lloyd, 2018).

Teacher B also used textbook activities where they would learn about foreign foods by creating activities and worksheets where their students would need to introduce their favorite food to others as efforts to encourage students to view their own cultural context within a broader global context. This type of approach also pushes students to see their own environment and culture as valuable and worth sharing while they develop skills needed for cross-cultural communication skills. However, it is important to note that it was once again only Teacher B amongst the interviewed teachers who talked about using these pedagogical

strategies. This could again be influenced by her unique position as the only teacher at an IB curriculum-integrated school, giving her the opportunity and resources to include these types of GCE practices.

This pattern reveals that these adaptation efforts continue to stem from individual teacher efforts rather than any institutional support and resources. Even teachers like Teacher B that may have a more supportive school environment for GCE implementation, her strategies end up being solely her own.

Conservative Cultural Context Navigation

Teachers also spoke briefly of their contextual restraints but also shared they had limited strategies when it came to actively navigating these challenges. Multiple teachers talked about being in Daegu as a primary limiting factor when it came to adopting possible GCE adaptation strategies. When asked why they found it difficult to incorporate GCE material that might be more relevant to their students, teachers like Teacher E simply said, "Daegu is a conservative city" as a clear justification for these limited adaptation strategies.

Teacher A provided a more detailed insight into these limitations: "The officials are very conservative and they consider politics as well. They're [Korean parents] very interested in their students' curriculum…going to a good university is very important. So if the government or the Ministry of Education does something unnecessary, they might be very angry and…they might file complaints, you know, so it's very hard to change." Teacher G similarly shared that "I think parents in Daegu case they don't know much about GCE. Many parents [haven't] heard or face at all about GCE I think…They are very old school in terms of education concept and society."

Their answers further confirm that the educators understanding of their cultural and political constraints is not the major gap facing English secondary teachers in Daegu, their

lack of training and institutional support to go about developing appropriate GCE strategies needed to work within these constraints are virtually non-existent. Instead of helping teachers find ways to work with parents and students to bring about meaningful GCE implementation, the solution ends up being avoidance strategies to comply with parents demands in order to protect political standing and maintain harmony.

Category 5: Support Systems and Implementation Challenges

Professional Development Inadequacy

GCE literature and research shows that opportunities for professional development and training prove to be the most important factor when it comes to global citizenship implementation in classrooms (Saperstein, 2020). Based on the teacher interviews, all seven participants reported receiving minimal to no training whatsoever in GCE concepts, teaching approaches or implementation strategies. Even Teacher B, who had the most exposure to GCE material due to their IB school background, received no formal training from her school system on delivery and teaching strategies. This proves to be the biggest challenge in proper GCE implementation as teachers are left to understand and then figure out a way to teach this material on their own, and combined with other institutional and educational factors present in their environment, they end up opting to take a more safer and superficial route when it GCE delivery, preferring to play it safe.

Limited Awareness of Available Resources

Teachers spoke not only of the lack of professional training they should have been given in the past, but also their limited knowledge on where and how to access such resources and workshops that may already exist, both online and in-person. Teacher E mentioned briefly hearing about a seminar in GCE in the past, but they were marketed as being

voluntary-based. With other already present school pressures and time demands on the teachers, devoting time for seminars that were not mandatory was almost an unrealistic ask for teachers.

Teacher G went on to say that their perspective was that the Daegu education board was becoming more interested in GCE overtime and in the recent past also distributed pamphlets and articles about the same, however that was the extent of information relayed to them. Distributions of articles and pamphlets also show that institutional support remains resource-provision-only. The other teachers had no such knowledge of existing material from their institutions or education boards that they knew of or could utilize on the topic, and if it existed, they were never made aware of it. This limited knowledge suggests further communication gaps between education policy design and classroom implementation where even existing resources may be present but fail to reach the educators who need to utilize them.

However, other teachers like Teacher D doubted the effectiveness of GCE training and workshops even if they were provided and mandatory by their institutions saying they'd be better off learning from online materials. This response shows that there is an awareness of how institutional support would be beneficial while simultaneously dismissing the value or relevance of these institutionally provided resources. The need for online resources shows that while teachers value autonomy in material selection, they lack appropriate direction to know high-quality content suitable for their environments, hence, proving the need of appropriate teacher training. Additionally, this challenge of resource accessibility appears to be the root cause of the textbook dependency seen in GCE implementation in these classrooms.

Assessment and Evaluation Challenges

Assessment challenges create extra barriers towards full GCE implementation since they limit teachers' capacity to evaluate student learning and justify the allocation of curriculum time to GCE activities. Teacher B specifically spoke about this challenge: "One more challenge is evaluation system is very limited in Korean…the midterm exam and final exam [is] focused on the reading exam…[Korean teachers] have difficulties in making rubrics of speaking and writing evaluation. So I think they just avoid them and focused on the reading exam." The test challenges are another major barrier in the implementation of GCE since global citizenship competencies are characterized by development skills that cannot necessarily be tested by using simple knowledge-based measures, but rather require high-level assessment strategies. The Korean education system's emphasis on standardized testing further pushes towards teaching content that can easily be evaluated with traditional measures, excluding room for more ambitious GCE implementation.

DISCUSSION

<u>Interpreting Findings and Theoretical Contributions</u>

The Dominance of Soft GCE Orientations

The overall findings from the seven teacher interviews suggests that due to their constrained environments and rigid school systems, English teachers working in secondary schools in Daegu predominantly utilize "soft" approaches when implementing GCE in their classrooms. Their heavy avoidance of critical thinking and questioning creates a wide gap in what the intended use of GCE in national policy desires and the actual practices in the classroom. However, lack of resources are not solely to blame. The teachers themselves almost exclusively view GCE in the context of surface-level cultural exchange and general international awareness and tolerance rather than an active examination of global structures or social justice issues.

This outcome in the research is consistent with previous Korean GCE research that also differentiates between "soft" and "critical" GCE approaches and their visibility in classrooms. The interviews further confirm that teachers' conceptions of GCE are also shaped by the materials available to them and the institutional expectations expressed to them by their schools rather than a more comprehensive understanding of how GCE can play a transformative role in schools.

Contextual Constraints and Teacher Agency

Another major finding from the interviews was the effect of contextual factors when it came to GCE implementation and the teachers' ability to deliver GCE content effectively. Daegu's conservative education environment, combined with intense standardized testing pressures creates conditions where teachers avoid potentially controversial global topics that might defy local perspectives and parental expectations. This conclusion adds to existing literature on Korean educational constraints by demonstrating how local differences throughout the country can intensify implementation challenges beyond those already confirmed in studies that look into the greater Seoul area.

Another important and major confirmation from the research was that none of the teachers had any formal training in GCE, regardless of how long they have been teaching for. Additionally, Daegu's relatively homogeneous context means teachers have limited authentic multicultural experiences to draw upon for classroom implementation. This is important because it gives a glimpse into teacher preparedness to deliver GCE in other cities in Korea and contributes further to current research in overall Korean teacher professional development in GCE. The experiences of the teachers further highlighted that GCE understanding for them is a matter of personal initiative rather than systematic institutional

motivation and support as they possess neither the time nor encouragement to take on further specialized training.

Connections to Existing Research

What This Research Confirms and Extends

The findings from the interviews confirm previous research that identified discrepancies between GCE policy intentions and classroom practice in Korean contexts. The teachers' heavy reliance on textbooks to impart GCE knowledge aligns with previous literature where educators strongly adhered to pre-existing material rather than their own creative teaching approaches to impart GCE. The exam focused educational culture also played a big role for the interviewees in not being able to invest time and energy into finding more transformative educational practices, not to mention not being able to justify the need of these practices to their student body and community. This research is able to extend and confirm these findings in underresearched regional contexts as well. The absence of professional development opportunities in Daegu for these teachers also falls in line with patterns observed in larger Korean education studies on GCE as well, also validating previous recommendations as well for organized reforms of teacher education training by older studies.

This research also extends existing knowledge by looking into the contextual factors that impact GCE implementation. Similar to many GCE studies focusing on Asian regions, the teachers demonstrated in their interviews actively avoided controversial topics as they were concerned with parents and administrative backlash. Additionally, the lack of proper training and GCE instruction even for the teachers leads to a more superficial GCE understanding amongst the educators as well, therefore touching only on surface-level GCE topics. This further adds to current knowledge that suggests that teaching training must also

address conceptual understanding of GCE for them as a sort of prerequisite for effective GCE implementation.

Contradictions and Nuances in the Research

While previous research had shown that English language classrooms provided the most appropriate spaces for GCE due to their cross-cultural nature, the findings from this research shows that this may not always be the case. The teachers in this research were not adept at capitalizing on the cross-cultural potential of their English classrooms. This suggests that the language learning environment alone is insufficient without having appropriate teacher training and institutional support.

Knowledge Contributions, Limitations, and Future Research

Contributions to Knowledge on GCE Implementation

This research contributes to knowledge regarding how GCE is implemented in non-major cities/regional contexts by revealing how local educational culture might affect teacher practices. The research shows that the successful implementation of GCE requires both appropriate conceptual knowledge and practical teaching strategies for mediating tensions between global agendas and local realities. The study also confirms that teachers feel isolated when asked to implement GCE, and peer networks and collaborative learning environments would play important roles in the development of more sophisticated approaches to global citizenship education.

The study also provides evidence that aligning the educational curriculum with regional educational realities is more complicated than international-to-local transferability often suggests. The findings imply that materials addressing possible issues at the community level and connecting global topics to local students' own experiences might be required for

successful roll-out. The study contributes to the understanding of how teacher preparation programs might need to include GCE preparation in their official agendas, rather than relying on voluntary professional development, particularly in regional contexts where access to specialized training is anyway limited.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research's limitations point towards important directions for future research. The seven-participant sample size, while appropriate for this qualitative case study analysis, limits the degree to which conclusions can be generalized across all parts of the broader Daegu area which include localities with different economic and social backgrounds. Additionally, focusing on Daegu gives a look into cities and towns beyond just the greater Seoul area where most of the earlier research papers are based. However, Daegu is still an urban area and is unable to represent other educational systems and social challenges which may exist in other Korean regions, especially rural areas. Future comparative research when looking at Korea's multiple regions could assess whether these findings are parallel to those found in other parts of the country.

The exclusive focus of the research on just local English teachers does not also represent a full understanding of how GCE implementation exists within the same school environment as variations in results may exist across subject areas and their curriculum requirements and agendas. Future research should look into other subject and possibly other language teachers in Daegu as well to see if these contextual restraints are as present in their pedagogical practices as well.

Additionally, only speaking to teachers and their perceptions of student and parent perspectives on GCE and its importance rather than first-hand insights from them, further limits the understanding of the broader education culture in the city that influences teacher

decision-making. Future studies would benefit from including them as well to get a better understanding of parental and student expectations when it comes to GCE, its value and its place within the current education system from their perspective.

Finally, the methodology of this research relied on interviews rather than first-hand observational practices in the classroom which may be better at capturing the overall picture in terms of how the teachers went about implementing GCE, even unintentionally. Observational data might offer a better insight into the extent to which teacher conceptualizations of GCE and the challenges they spoke about within the curriculum and everyday class environment are actually seen in practice. An additional research perspective that would be interesting to explore in the future would be to see how these issues develop over time as teacher training may increase and also the role technology plays in filling these resource gaps where institutional support proves insufficient for teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the conceptualization and implementation of global citizenship education in Daegu, South Korea by secondary school English teachers in their classrooms. Seven teachers were interviewed and a five-category framework system was used to carry out thematic analysis and detect patterns in their responses. The research presents a complicated situation where the teachers wish to teach GCE but face many constraints that prevent them from doing so.

The results of the findings show that teachers in Daegu have positive attitudes towards GCE and believe it is important for their students' professional and personal growth. However, as they try to implement it in the class, they are faced with serious challenges. These challenges make them resort to "soft" GCE approaches focusing on cultural sensitivity instead of critical analysis of global issues. The main barriers include Korea's examination

and university entrance oriented school priorities, rigid curriculum requirements, lack of teacher training, and conservative schooling culture. Such barriers make genuine GCE implementation very hard even if teachers are genuinely willing.

This research adds valuable data to current research on GCE implementation in non-Western countries. It shows how the local context in different Korean cities can present various other challenges from those researchers have found in Seoul-based studies. The findings show that successful GCE implementation needs more than committed teachers. It needs systematic shifts in the whole system, from instructor training to assessment practices, flexibility in the curriculum, and organizational support structures. Additionally, the study also reflects the necessity of having knowledge of local educational contexts in the application of global school programs. The reflections from teachers in this study show how top-down policy practice does not consider regional and teacher agency constraints. This results in huge discrepancies between what policies intend to do and what actually happens in classrooms.

South Korea remains committed to being a proactive participant in global affairs and development cooperation. This makes seamless GCE implementation increasingly important in their educational goals. However, this research assumes that achieving GCE's transformational potential demands moving beyond rhetoric. It involves substantial structural changes empowering educators as change agents and providing them with the conceptual understanding, practical tools, and the institutional support necessary for effective implementation.

The English language classroom is the most suitable location for the fulfillment of global citizenship through cross-cultural communication, international thinking, and media literacy. However, this potential remains largely unrealized when teachers have not been

equipped through training, resources, and systemic support to transcend superficial cultural exchange to more substantive encounters with global issues and social justice themes.

Overall, this study demonstrates that effective GCE implementation does not rely solely on curriculum development or the professional development opportunities for teachers. It requires fundamental systemic change that aligns education priorities, assessment plans, staff development, and school cultures with the values of global citizenship. Only through such collective effort can policy hopes and teaching practices be united. This would enable students from places like Daegu to develop the critical consciousness and global competencies necessary for active participation in a more globalized world.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Korean English Secondary School Teacher Interview Questionnaire

Korean English Language Secondary School Teacher Interview Questions

<u>Interview Protocol</u>

Good afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me and answer some questions about your experiences as an educator. As you know, my name is Alina and I am a masters student at the Geneva Graduate Institute. I am conducting research as part of my master's thesis on how global citizenship education is perceived and implemented in English classrooms in and around Daegu. This interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes and will focus on your experiences, perceptions, and practices related to GCE. To ensure I accurately capture your thoughts, is it okay if I record this session? The recording will be used solely for research purposes, and your responses will remain confidential. If, during the course of the interview, you wish to stop or don't want to answer a question, please let me know. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

<u>Questions: Background Information</u>
1. Can you tell me about your teaching experience?
   - How long have you been teaching (in secondary school/Daegu)?
   - What grade levels do you primarily teach?
2. Have you had any prior training or professional development related to global citizenship education (GCE)?
   - If yes, could you briefly describe it?

<u>Questions: Teacher Perceptions of GCE</u>
1. How would you personally define *global citizenship*?
   - *If needed, maybe encourage thinking about terms or phrases that may come to mind.*
2. In your opinion, why is GCE important (or not) for students?
   - *Further contextualize by asking them if and why it is important for students in SK/Daegu in particular.*
   - How does it prepare them for the future?
3. What do you think are the key goals of GCE in English classrooms?
   - Are there particular values, skills, or attitudes you aim to foster in your students?
4. Do you think any cultural or societal challenges exist in implementing GCE in high/middle schools in Daegu?
   - How do you think GCE aligns with local cultural norms and educational priorities?

<u>Questions: Implementation of GCE in the Classroom</u>
1. How do you incorporate GCE into your teaching of the English language?
   - Are there specific lessons, activities, or themes you emphasize?
   - Could you give examples of materials or topics you use?

2. Do you personally take any steps to adapt the GCE content to fit the local context? If so, how? If not, why?
   - Are there examples or activities that resonate particularly well with students in Daegu?
3. What types of global citizenship (e.g., critical, moral, neoliberal - *make sure to give a brief definition for each or just ask them with the definitions itself*) do you feel are most reflected in your teaching? Why?
4. Have you noticed differences in how students engage with GCE topics?
   - Are there particular themes or topics that students find challenging or exciting?
5. How do students' parents or guardians typically respond to GCE in your classroom?

Questions: Support and Challenges
1. Do you feel adequately supported in teaching GCE?
   - What kind of support have you received (e.g., training, resources, curriculum guidance)?
   - What areas do you feel lack support?
2. What challenges have you encountered while implementing GCE in your classroom?
   - How do you address these challenges?
3. How does your school's curriculum align with your approach to GCE?
   - Are there opportunities for collaboration with colleagues on GCE topics?

Questions: Closing Reflections
1. If you could make changes to better support GCE in your school, what would they be?
   - Are there resources, training, or policy changes you believe would help?
2. How do you see the role of GCE evolving in Daegu high schools and/or the South Korean education system?
3. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences with GCE?

Thank you very much for speaking with me today and answering my questions. I found our discussion very interesting and enlightening. If you think of anything you'd like to add or clarify, please don't hesitate to let me know. Please let me know if you would also like to receive a copy of the transcript of this interview for your review as well. Thank you so much once again!