INVESTIGATING GLOBAL EDUCATION
IN LOW-INCOME NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOLS
IN TORONTO

A research paper submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Master of Teaching
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs CC BY-NC-ND

Copyright by Audrey Madsen, April 2015
Abstract

The idea of global citizenship is increasingly promoted in Canadian schools. Research on global citizenship defines it as a framework that encourages students to think of themselves as members of a global community, with the responsibility to consider the global effects of their actions. Traditionally, global education has been promoted primarily in affluent schools and it has been equated with fundraising campaigns to help those from less fortunate countries. Equating global education with fundraising raises concerns for less affluent communities. This study examines schools in low Socio-Economic Status (SES) areas in order to challenge the idea that global education is best suited to economically privileged neighbourhood schools. Based on interviews with three teachers in low SES neighbourhoods, this study examines their perceptions of global education; examples of how it was successfully incorporated into their lesson plans, and barriers to integrating global education into classroom practices. Ultimately, this study finds that the diversity of many low SES schools provides an ideal platform for global education. By alternating between soft and critical approaches to global education, teachers are able to deliver a culturally responsive pedagogy that explores global connections to local issues.

Key Words: Global education, Global citizenship, Teaching, Culturally relevant pedagogy, Poverty, Low income groups, Urban schools, Socio-economic status, Non-governmental organizations
Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. Janet Markus, for pushing me to write with integrity and clarity so this research paper is the best that it can be. Additionally, I want to express sincere gratitude for the participants in this study who gave me their time, along with their invaluable insights and astute ideas. I learned so much from you and your teaching practices in our short time together. It is vital to include thanks to my classmates and cohort in the Master of Teaching class of 2015, who have taught me more about teaching than any research paper, any professor, or any coursework could. Thank you for sharing your experiences and opinions so openly. Thank you for the laughs, the tears and all the hugs. Special thanks to Sarah for her assistance with the editing process.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank my friends and family for being my personal team of cheerleaders, encouraging me every step of the way in my latest academic endeavour. Finally, I’d like to thank my partner for always believing in me, even when I refused to crawl out from under the kitchen table. Your everlasting faith in me to succeed along with your constant love, support and editing skills, drive me to be better, every single day. I am exceptionally grateful to all of you and could not have done it without you.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. ii  
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................... iii 

Chapter 1: Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1  
1.1 Background of the study .................................................................................................................. 1  
1.2 Purpose of the Study ......................................................................................................................... 3  
1.3 Research Questions ......................................................................................................................... 4  
1.4 Background of the Researcher ......................................................................................................... 4  
1.5 Overview ......................................................................................................................................... 5  

Chapter 2: Literature Review ............................................................................................................... 6  
2.1 What’s the Consensus on Global Education? .................................................................................. 6  
2.2 Learning Skills and Values through Global Education ................................................................. 8  
2.3 Canadian Interpretation of Global Education ............................................................................... 10  
2.4 Individual Teacher Role in Global Education ............................................................................. 11  
2.5 Examples of Global Education in Action ..................................................................................... 12  
2.6 Influence of NGOs on Global Education ..................................................................................... 15  
2.7 Barriers to Global Education in the Classroom ......................................................................... 17  
2.8 Challenges with NGO Influence on Global Education ............................................................... 20  
2.9 Challenges Integrating Global Education in Low Socio-Economic Schools ......................... 22  

Chapter 3: Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 26  
3.1 Procedure ...................................................................................................................................... 26  
3.2 Instruments of Data Collection ..................................................................................................... 27  
3.3 Participants ..................................................................................................................................... 28  
3.4 Data Collection and Analysis ........................................................................................................ 30  
3.5 Ethical Review Procedures ............................................................................................................ 30  
3.6 Limitations ..................................................................................................................................... 31  

Chapter 4: Findings ............................................................................................................................... 33  
4.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 33  
4.2 The Basics: Understanding What Global Education Means to Educators ............................... 33  
4.3 Teaching Values and Skills through Global Education ............................................................... 35  
4.4 Students as Activists ...................................................................................................................... 37
4.5 Examples of Class Content Through a Global Education Lens ......................................... 39
4.6 Challenges Implementing Global Education .................................................................... 43
4.7 Student and Teacher Engagement ................................................................................ 49
4.8 Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 52

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION ...................................................................................................... 54
5.1 Fragmentation of Global Education: A Blessing and Curse ........................................ 54
5.2 Shift to Critical Global Education .................................................................................. 55
5.3 Combining Global Education and Culturally Responsive Pedagogies ....................... 57
5.4 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research ........................................... 59
5.5 Implications and Recommendations for Future Practice ............................................ 61
5.6 Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 63

References .......................................................................................................................... 64

Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview ..................................................................... 67
Appendix B: Interview Questions ........................................................................................ 69
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Schools in Canada have increasingly promoted the idea of a global citizen, encompassing the perspective that students are members of a global community, with responsibilities to consider the global effects of their actions. This idea contrasts with the long-understood notion of citizen that is typically defined in national terms, with civic duties and allegiance to one specific nation. National citizenry is reflected in Canadian curriculum documents, with a focus on developing informed and engaged citizens of Canada who will contribute to and uphold liberal-democratic values. As this model of national citizenry is expanding and reacting to the progressively globalized structure of our world, it is motivating teachers to include global citizenship education into their classrooms.

Global education is used as a framework to promote learning about the problems and issues that cut across national boundaries. This framework focuses on the interconnectedness of culture, ecology, economies, politics, and technology. Global education also involves learning to understand and appreciate our neighbours with different cultural backgrounds from ours; to see the world through the eyes of others; and to realise that other people of the world need and want many of the same things as we do. In order for our students to be prepared to live, work and function in a world that is globally interconnected, it is necessary to teach awareness of these issues that link humans across the world, and teach how we can affect the development of these issues in a positive direction. In order to accomplish these aims, more teachers are incorporating global education frameworks into their pedagogy.
There is no simple, single definition of global education that is widely accepted. Due to the extensive quantity of global issues, and the lens of presenting these issues from a specific national viewpoint, the ways to present global education are highly variable. Early definitions of global education formed shortly after the Second World War (1946) and focused on national interests and economic competitiveness in a global market. This perspective embodies the capitalist market ideals that dictated international relations throughout the Cold War. Since the late 1990s, a progressive and more radical interpretation of global education has gained traction, which includes an examination of social justice, global inequalities, and solidarity that extends across national boundaries, viewing the world as one connected community.

Current curriculum documents across Canada address varying elements of global education, usually starting in the junior grades (4-6), through the Social Studies subject. The curriculum in Canada is developed at the provincial level, so each region has a slightly different approach to the topic. In Ontario curriculum documents, global education is not addressed through specific expectations within any curriculum subject area. Rather, the responsibility for global education falls onto teachers who are encouraged to integrate global issues into their presentation of various subjects. This means the way global education is incorporated into actual classroom practice varies dramatically from class to class, and school to school. In extreme cases, it may not be introduced at all. The location of the school, the demographics of its population and surrounding neighbourhood, the relationship between the school and the community, the level of involvement of the administration in curriculum initiatives, and the interest of its teachers are all factors that can affect the successful integration of global education practices in a school environment.
In fact, global education is often seen as a framework for the privileged, where teachers have access to time and resources to invest in its integration. For many schools in low-income neighbourhoods, global education can be viewed as extraneous, as more work for teachers who are already contributing above and beyond to ensure the safety and success of their students. This study investigates this trend, considering the success of three teachers who work to use global education combined with a culturally relevant pedagogical approach to engage students in local issues to then examine their greater global context. In this way, the reader will find global education can be a useful tool to connect with students in schools facing greater socio-economic challenges.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study investigates instructional practices related to global education in schools in the Toronto District School Board categorized at the highest end of the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) (Toronto District School Board, 2014). This index ranks schools based on measurements of external challenges affecting student success. Schools at the top of the list are categorized as facing the most barriers to student achievement. Key indicators in the index include family income, family status, and parental education levels, among others. Through the examination of the practices of schools at the highest end of the LOI, this study uncovers the teaching strategies and instructional approaches teachers use to introduce global education at schools facing high levels of external challenges.
1.3 Research Questions

This investigation explores how teachers implement global education in the classroom, specifically working in schools situated in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods. Questions include the following:

a. What are the perspectives and experiences of teachers in low socio-economic status (SES) urban elementary schools on the implementation of global education?
b. How do teachers integrate global issues into course content in schools with a high Learning Opportunity Index ranking within the Toronto District School Board?
c. What teaching strategies and instructional practices do teachers use to implement global education?
d. What motivates teachers to integrate global perspectives in the classroom?
e. What limitations (if any) do teachers experience in the implementation of global education?

1.4 Background of the Researcher

My interest in this topic draws from my previous training in international development, which ignited my personal passions to promote awareness of global issues. This passion led to extended experience fundraising for and working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to sponsor global perspectives. I have direct experience with global education initiatives in schools as a volunteer Global Educator with an NGO, and three years of employment as a fundraiser and educator with a national health non-profit organization. These experiences gave me the opportunity to witness the barriers limiting access to global education in school settings. I observed that schools with a greater base for fundraising (i.e. in wealthier neighbourhoods) received priority for scheduling and resources from the organizations. Schools with a lower base for fundraising were frequently excluded from recruitment campaigns and were often not
considered to be viable participants in the program initiatives. This represents one small example of the accessibility problems related to global education and community outreach programs, which have led to my interest to further investigate the topic through this research study.

1.5 Overview

Chapter 1 includes the introduction and purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as my personal interest in global education. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature, examining current studies that have contributed to defining global education practices, and analyzing current trends related to educational opportunities for schools in low socio-economic settings. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and procedures used in this study including information about the sample participants and data collection instruments. This includes an overview of the Toronto District School Board’s Learning Opportunity Index. Chapter 4 identifies the participants in the study and describes the data as it addresses the research question. Chapter 5 includes limitations of the study, conclusions, recommendations for practice, and further reading and study. References and a list of appendixes appear at the end of the paper.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 What’s the Consensus on Global Education?

Defining global education is a contentious issue because of its ever-extending scope. Initial conceptions of incorporating world studies into classroom programming first appeared shortly after World War One, mostly in the UK. Global education did not gain serious international traction until after the Second World War, following the establishment of the United Nations organization. Since then, global education has morphed into different forms, including a variety of interpretations that exist today, each with a slightly different focus. The practice of global education in schools is quite malleable, depending on the teacher, the students, school culture and regional placement. Some school boards have general guidelines about integrating global education into classroom practices, but they do not provide a prescribed curriculum (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007). This offers a certain amount of flexibility for each teacher to interpret the framework, and it is left to the individual educator to decide the approach and issue to study. The lack of structure leads to a fragmented implementation of global education because individual teachers are making curricular connections in isolation. The presentations are fragmented further when external actors like non-governmental organizations (NGOs) begin to develop resources to promote global education, each with their own priorities to promote (Tallon, 2012).

A broad understanding of global education incorporates the ideas of bringing world issues into the local classroom. For the purposes of this study, I will draw from the definitions presented by Mundy and Mannion in “Global Education in Canadian Elementary Schools: An Exploratory Study” (2008). Their study provides the most recent holistic overview of what global education is and what it looks like in Canadian classrooms. They surveyed literature going
back 50 years to develop a current definition of global education. In doing so, they were able to categorize various definitions along a spectrum to increase comprehension of the issue. They found traditional practices of teaching subject-specific world issues such as national interests, economic competitiveness and world travel as exposure to new cultures dominated one end of the continuum, or what is also referred to as “soft global education” (Andreotti, 2006). The goals of soft global education intend to end poverty and helplessness, and define global actors in terms of a binary relationship consisting of the ‘haves’ versus the ‘have-nots’. This perspective conceptualizes a responsibility FOR the other, encouraging individual action to teach the other how to “catch-up” to the current standards of development as defined by Western notions of a capitalist world structure.

The other end of the spectrum is known as “critical global education” (Andreotti, 2006). Critical global education is gaining in popularity, as it embraces the holistic framework of global education, including ideals such as social justice, issues of global inequality, human rights, international development practices and global solidarity. The goals of critical global education aim to correct inequality and injustice, with a responsibility TO the other, working in solidarity to develop solutions to inequality together. This perspective recognizes global actors as part of the problem of global inequality, as well as giving the responsibility and resolution to global actors to work toward solutions. Critical global education also empowers individuals to act, but this lens insists on the inclusion of critical reflection to question the nature of our actions, to consider how they may be reinforcing colonial structures that uphold the very injustices we are working to resolve.

Even with these distinct differences along the continuum, the study reveals several common values that are consistent in respect to global education practices, as defined in other
research (Standish, 2014); (Haapanen, 2013); (Gallavan, 2008); (Jefferess, 2008); (Zhao, 2011); (Andreotti, 2006); (Hicks, 2003); (Pike, 2000). These values include viewing the world as one interdependent system; commitment to basic human rights and equal access to said rights; valuing cultural diversity and tolerance; a belief in the efficacy of individual action; commitment to child-centred pedagogy; and commitment to sustainability. Highlighting these values provides a contextual understanding of the common goals that global education is expected to promote.

In order to provide a working definition of global education for the purposes of my study, I will take inspiration from Robert Case about the fragmented definitions for global education. Case said: “We should not automatically assume that greater clarity about the goals of global education is necessary. Loosely defined coalitions … often permit otherwise disparate factions to ally in pursuit of common, or at least compatible goals” (Case cited in Hicks, 2003, p. 270).

While the following review of the literature will investigate some of the differences between soft and critical global education in addition to differing regional interpretations, I will rely on a broad and open understanding of the concept in order to make comprehensive connections with practicing teachers. There is a fear of using a definition of global education that is too strict or critical, thus limiting the sample of teachers who can share their experiences incorporating global perspectives in their lessons. For the purposes of this investigation, the term global education is employed as a catchall for the global approach and speaking with practicing teachers will offer insight as to where their practices lie along the continuum of global education.

2.2 Learning Skills and Values through Global Education

Several studies present global education in the form of learning values and skills in addition to knowledge of different parts of the world (Hicks, 2003) (Mundy, Mannion, &
Haggerty, 2007) (Standish, 2014). As Mundy et al. (2007) reveal in their report titled “Charting Global Education in Canada’s Elementary School: Provincial, District and School Level Perspectives,” “Teachers increasingly see human rights as priority values to be taught in the elementary classroom … tend[ing] to focus on cooperation and caring rather than more contentious issues like competition” (2007, p. 12). It is the active promotion of this set of values that resonates with global education. It is about “going beyond the educational aim of developing knowledge and understanding of the world…[to] include the ethical dimension” (Standish, 2014, p. 175). Teachers use the global education framework to promote values like cooperation, empathy, celebrating diversity, and recognizing the power of action of the individual to make change. This means there is necessarily an inclusive element in global issues. At its core, global education involves embracing the whole and taking a holistic approach.

Educators often make connections through character development programs imposed by school boards. For example, Toronto District School Board implements a character development program by introducing a new theme each month like respect, responsibility, empathy, fairness, and cooperation (Toronto District School Board, 2014). Students explore each theme as it is woven into programs and practices, becoming a way of life. Many teachers see the easy connection of these themes to global citizenship education and use the character education platform to explore the values associated with global education. This provides the opportunity for students to think critically and creatively in the global context.

Hicks (2003) uses Oxfam’s framework to provide a clear interpretation of the values and skills promoted by global education. In addition to the values outlined above, the skills learned through global education relate to critical thinking, the ability to communicate arguments efficiently, the ability to recognize and stand up to injustice, along with cooperation and conflict
resolution. Not only are students taught the value of cooperation, but there is opportunity within the global education framework to actually develop and practice this skill relating to compromise and communication. Teachers integrate these values and skills into their goals for class activities that promote knowledge and understanding of global issues. The weight or significance placed on each skill and value is dependent upon the specific teacher, and school environment in which it is presented.

2.3 Canadian Interpretation of Global Education

With such a variety of approaches to frame global education, it is possible to make some identifying claims to differentiate between national practices. This is where a strong distinction is evident between the soft and critical approaches to global education. Pike (2000) identifies how regional differences lead to different understandings of global education. Mundy et al. (2007) details the history of foreign policy in Canada and provides insight into the development of Canada’s global education approach. Political developments in the 1960s, ‘70s and ‘80s led to the promotion of multiculturalism in Canada, with the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 actively promoting respect for diversity and equitable practices. This political era also led to increased funding for international teaching programs, where teachers were travelling to developing countries to teach for short contracts. This resulted in teachers returning to Canada, wanting to share their experiences of different cultures and promote the global cooperation that would perpetuate this successful cycle of international learning opportunities.

As a result of this support for global experience funded by the Canadian government, global education in Canada developed a critical and experiential approach. Global education in Canada encapsulates a holistic framework; as Pike (2000, p. 66) says it is, “seen as a vehicle for
synthesizing hitherto unconnected elements of the curriculum and of the school.” He highlights the Canadian interpretation of global education as action-oriented given that socio-political events are presented with a critical view. This view recognizes the need to change the current hegemonic structures that organize global politics. Hicks (2003) says Canadian educators are more likely to focus on the common interests of people, the planet, and personal growth, rather than national development. While Americans emphasise harmony and similarity in their approach, Canadian practitioners tend to highlight differences in relation to wealth, power and history.

While Pike (2000) and Hicks (2003) are making broad conclusions based on national practices, Mundy et al. (2007) conduct a closer examination of global education practices in Canada, and are able to recognize patterns at a provincial level, some of which contradict the conclusions Pike and Hicks have made. In Ontario, Mundy et al. (2007) discovered that educators frequently conceptualize global education in terms of economic competitiveness, which actually promotes the soft approach to global education. While they did have a limited sample size at each province level in order to conduct their survey, the results from Mundy et al. demonstrate the range of variability in global education, even within one single nation.

2.4 Individual Teacher Role in Global Education

Teachers have the freedom and flexibility to develop their own interpretation of global education, which explains the extensive scope of topics that can fall under its broad umbrella. Based on their own interests, teachers can focus their framework on a wide range of issues including environmental issues, human rights issues, and migration issues. Pike (2000) suggests the classroom teacher class holds personal responsibility for not only introducing these topics,
but for their interpretation as well. Pike (2000, p. 64) quotes Tucker as saying “teachers, not textbooks, appear to be the primary carriers of global education culture.” While there are books and online resources available to support teachers in their planning, because of the holistic nature of global education, it really is up to each teacher to design their individual approach. As one principal in the study suggests (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007, p. 76), what gets taught is heavily influenced by teachers’ individual interpretations, their knowledge base, and their selection of examples.

Teachers who choose to integrate global education often do so because of their own past international experience. One survey (Holden & Hicks, 2007, p. 20) reports that teachers said it was “essential” that pupils learn about such issues, expand their horizons, be able to live internationally, and see beyond their own “small world”. Teachers were also motivated by the potential ripple effect a more worldly perspective would have on their students. Research suggests that children can influence their parents and often affect their parents’ political participation (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007). Teachers were motivated to employ a global perspective in the classroom to have greater community influence.

2.5 Examples of Global Education in Action

There are many specific examples of lesson plans that demonstrate the integration of the global education framework, providing distinctions between the soft and critical approach to global education. Ideally, global education should be holistically integrated in all subject areas and student learning from kindergarten to grade twelve. It should be a strategy that teachers use to frame the materials presented in class. For example, when introducing a dance unit, a teacher engaged with global education will present the unit in way that includes cultures from around the
world. Students have to research a specific type of dance and the ceremony associated with the performance. Then students will present their interpretation of the dance itself. This is an example of the soft interpretation of global education that celebrates world-travel and diversity.

Standish (2014) describes other classroom activities that promote the global education framework. Several activities are similar, in their promotion of cooperative action to complete a group task. There is no single winner or loser in these scenarios; when the group works together, they all achieve a positive outcome. One such simple activity from Oxfam has two students sitting in a hula-hoop, facing opposite directions. On either side of the hula-hoop, place two objects (like balls, or apples) just out of reach of each student. The students must work together to coordinate for each student to pick up the object on their side, without either student getting out of the hoop. This basic activity demonstrates the overlap of several skills like cooperation and compromise as promoted in both soft and critical global education. Additionally, the activity focuses on understanding multiple perspectives, which aligns with the critical global education approach.

The Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC, 2008) provides another classroom activity that integrates global education, as described by Standish (2014). This is a directed activity that simulates the benefits of fair trade agreements. Groups of students represent families of farmers. Half of the families qualify as certified organic, while the other half are regular farmers. Groups are dealt chance cards that reflect situations that affect real farmers in these situations: family illness, crop infestation, drought, and so forth. At the end of several rounds of growth and trading, groups compare their profits, and discuss the differences that arise between fair trade certified farmers and regular farmers. The teacher directs the discussion so students can analyse their own consumption habits to consider the effects of purchasing fair trade products on
the global economy and on the local farmer. This encompasses the critical approach to global education because it encourages critical reflection of the current structures that define international trading relationships, presenting an alternative structure to consider as the solution.

Haapanen (2013) describes an activity that uses technology to create simulated trips to developing countries as a means to introduce new cultures into her classroom. While her approach accomplishes some of the universal goals of global education such as student-centred learning, inquiry and constructive knowledge, this experiential activity demonstrates soft global education. With a focus on broadening knowledge and understanding of other countries and cultures, it lacks the critical analysis of contemporary structures that is required of critical global education.

Selby and Pike have also produced volumes of classroom-based learning activities that invoke global education. One such activity included in *Teaching Green – The Middle Years* (Eds. Grant & Littlejohn, 2004) promotes an introduction to the interconnectedness of systems. Students individually write a word they associate with different categories, like emotion, animal, inanimate object, and so on. Then, students have to compare the word they wrote for the same category, and think of at least one way in which these two items are connected. The goal of this activity is to develop lateral and creative thinking skills, encouraging students to see connections and patterns between seemingly disparate items. Pike and Selby (2004) say that explicitly practicing these relational skills allows students to draw connections between curriculum areas, and how these connect to the real world. This approach embraces elements primarily associated with critical global education in its promotion of multiple perspectives, and critical reflection of the types of connections that can be made between seemingly unconnected topics.
Such examples show how global education can be integrated into classroom practices directed and led by the teacher. These activities enact elements of soft and critical global education, celebrating diversity in addition to thinking critically about personal motives and actions. These examples focus on skill development along with some value and knowledge acquisition that a single teacher can incorporate into the classroom. In addition to these types of activities, teachers can also find resources developed by non-governmental organizations to help integrate global education into their classrooms.

### 2.6 Influence of NGOs on Global Education

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a significant role in promoting global education. Many NGOs include classroom educational resources and programs as part of their awareness and outreach mandate (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007, p. 27). In order to promote change for a specific cause, NGOs design educational programs that encourage movement toward a targeted goal, garnering support from teachers and students to pursue this outcome. This type of global education resource usually emphasizes a type of action so students can feel empowered and connected to the goal (Mundy & Mannion, 2008). It can take the form of a community action plan, where students advocate for better awareness about these issues. Often the action is framed through a fundraising campaign. Schools are encouraged to host fundraising campaigns like bake sales or pledge drives to bring in financial support for the overall organizational goal, like raising funds to build a school in Kenya, or to buy a goat for a family in Guatemala, or to dig a well in India. These fundraisers demonstrate the value and skill development that global education aims to achieve. Students act to correct inequalities, cooperate in order to coordinate action, and recognize the positive effects of their actions.
It would be impossible to talk about global education without mentioning the organization Free The Children. This NGO was first established after the young 12-year-old Craig Kielburger began an advocacy campaign to end child labour after learning about the horrifying working conditions in textile factories in South-East Asia (Free The Children, 2015). Now, 20 years later, the organization focuses on international development, working to break the cycle of poverty in communities in India, Kenya, and Guatemala to provide school buildings and textbooks, to provide agricultural support for successful and sustainable farming, and to support other small-scale entrepreneurial endeavours so communities can rely on secure income avenues.

While working to meet these goals in their international communities, Free The Children provides resources domestically to promote awareness of the inequalities that exist in their supported communities. To this end, Free The Children has developed many curriculum-linked resources that teachers can easily integrate into the classroom to introduce topics like domestic and global poverty, gender inequality, food security, access to fresh water, human rights concerns, advocacy. For example, one lesson plan titled “We Bake For Change” (Free The Children, 2015) has students watch a documentary about chocolate production in different parts of the world. After learning about some of the harsh labour conditions, including the use of children as farm labour to grow cocoa beans, students compare these conditions to working in an ethical labour environment, and analyse how this may affect their consumption choices in the future, which develops investigative and advocacy skills. Students are then encouraged to coordinate a bake sale to raise funds to support Free The Children Adopt a Village projects to support education, clean water access, health programs, food security, and economic opportunities.
It is common for NGOs to offer similar classroom learning resources and materials that promote awareness of their cause locally as well as promote global citizenship (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007). Other organizations that offer resources similar to Free The Children are the Stephen Lewis Foundation, drawing attention to the AIDS pandemic with a focus in Africa; the Canadian Hunger Foundation focusing on small-scale development projects in Africa and Asia; Red Cross; UNICEF; and Amnesty International, among others. Since these curriculum packages are ready-formed by the NGOs, including action-oriented plans for students, many teachers feel comfortable using these materials as a vehicle to introduce global education into their classroom. Many NGOs promote fundraising to connect students to a course of action and it is common for schools to report fundraising for charity as the main global education activity (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007, pp. 27, 99). However, it is not always easy to deliver holistic global education programs with this approach, for reasons I will discuss in the next section.

2.7 Barriers to Global Education in the Classroom

Despite the broad-reaching opportunities to incorporate elements of global education into the classroom, many teachers hesitate to do so for a number of reasons. Mannion and Mundy (2008) identify that when global education is included in teaching, it is always driven by individual teacher efforts and planning. While there is high-level guidance available in limited documents provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education (Evans & Broad, 2010), the inclusion of global education is not specifically mandated. This means individual teachers must develop their own plans to integrate a global education perspective into the classroom. The personal
responsibility associated with global education can negatively influence a teacher’s decision to take on the framework without proper training. This is problematic for several reasons.

The first reason Gallavan (2008) highlights for this hesitation is that current teacher candidates are only moderately world-minded compared to prior generations. They do not engage in civic activities, national events and international relationships. Holden and Hicks (2007) uncovered similar conclusions conducting their survey of teacher candidates. Candidates who espoused the importance of including global perspectives had specific experiences living and working abroad; their international experiences prior to entering teacher training played a significant role in their pedagogical approaches (Singleton & Hays, 2008). For teachers lacking these international experiences and connections, there is a definite absence of inspiration to engage with the global education framework because it depends so much on personal knowledge and connections to the issues.

A lack of teacher experience connects to the second barrier that limits teacher engagement in global education. Holden and Hicks (2007) cite a survey of teacher education programs around the world that revealed only a small number of teacher training courses attempt to promote global education. Gallavan (2008) focuses on the lack of training provided to teacher candidates during preparation courses. Teachers-to-be do not even have the chance to discuss and explore what global education means to them before they find a place in their own classroom. As we have already seen, the fragmented presentations of global education makes it difficult to provide one universal definition that fully encompasses the framework, so it is essential that teacher candidates have a chance to explore the complex issues related to global education with guidance. Teachers often feel they lack opportunities to engage in ‘courageous conversations’, where they need to discuss subjects that are controversial and might upset parents.
or students (Singleton & Hays, 2008). If given professional development opportunities, teachers can build their repertoire and confidence to facilitate discussions around such controversial topics.

Increasing opportunities for exposure to global education during teacher-training would provide much needed experience and curb the anxiety that studies (Gallavan, 2008) (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007) (Holden & Hicks, 2007) reveal teachers feel in approaching some of the controversial topics covered in global education. In her survey with teacher candidates, Gallavan (2008) discovered that most teachers want to avoid controversy and prefer to follow the content endorsed by curriculum. Often it is a teacher’s lack of experience with a topic that causes the kind of anxiety that is revealed in the survey by Mundy et al. (2007). Teacher training programs need to include specific opportunities for teacher candidates to explore their understandings of and connections to global education.

Another barrier frequently referenced by teachers is a lack of time to develop curricular connections to global issues. In this way, the broad range of topics covered under the global education umbrella act as a deterrent for a teacher to integrate the framework. With an already intense teaching schedule that includes developing a full curriculum package to cover core subjects, some teachers find it overwhelming to then add global education on top of all the other requirements. Mundy et al.’s (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007) study suggests that knowledge sharing about global education is absent at the district or school level due to a lack of access to materials and limited timeframes. Without specific curriculum directives to include global education, and with such a vast amount of topics to sort through, many teachers simply feel the time constraints are too onerous for them to include meaningful references to global education. One strategy some teachers use in this position is to make connections with external
organizations like NGOs that have developed resources to introduce ideas of global education. However, there are some problems associated with the NGO influence on global education.

**2.8 Challenges with NGO Influence on Global Education**

There are three major criticisms of the way NGOs influence global education in the Canadian classroom. First, each NGO primarily focuses on its specific mandate and often presents its mandate through the lens associated with soft global education. The pursuit of one single point of action truncates the holistic approach that necessitates global education and understanding the world as an interconnected system. As Tallon (2012) illustrates “it’s the impressions that students are left with that often frame the developing world in a deficit mode, as ‘catching up to us’, and that diverse voices of the developing world are notably absent.” Therefore, classroom NGO material has the potential to frame young students’ earliest perspectives of the developing world. This model of “us and them” is the simplest way to present the complex system of international inequality. Tallon (2012) reveals this narrow perspective is usually the one that carries through with students when they are presented with educational materials from NGOs, remembering that it is “our” responsibility to help “them” in developing and needy parts of the world, ignoring the calls for interdependence and solidarity that ring true in critical global education. By relying on the binary relationship of the “haves” compared to the “have-nots”, this perspective excludes the large demographic in Canada that are also members of the “have-not” population. This means that students coming from communities with socio-economic challenges in Canada cannot see themselves reflected in the form of action that NGOs promote. In this way, these programs are perpetuating further structures of inequality, working against the overall goals of global education.
This singular viewpoint also shifts the focus to each organization’s need to carve out a base for fundraising, leaving the charity market in the awkward position of competing for limited resources with one-another (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007, p. 106). NGOs develop their educational materials as part of ‘branding campaigns’ that prioritize their own goals and approaches over others. The competition for funds directly contradicts the central value of cooperation that is associated with global education, and further contributes to the fragmented interpretations of global education.

Lastly, the problem with relying on NGOs that seek to fulfill fundraising quotas alongside their awareness campaigns relates to access and privilege. Jefferess (2008) highlights some of the disparities that can arise from practicing global education through NGO programs, specifically calling on the ease of access for students from higher-income families. He says: (Jefferess, 2008, p. 32) “Why Canadian, and specifically economically privileged Canadians, are in the position to [access these programs] is left unmarked.” From this analysis, it seems clear that there are class limitations to access global education through this medium.

By evaluating forms of action by their capacity to raise funds, NGO programs are promoting Western-centric ideals, and upholding the binary relationship that we, the rich, need to give to them, the poor, in order to solve greater issues of poverty and inequality. The problem becomes more complex when taking into consideration the unequal wealth and power distribution within the local community. Students coming from a personal support network that is able to contribute any amount of disposable income to different charity campaigns may have more opportunities to connect with global education programming, as offered by NGOs.
2.9 Challenges Integrating Global Education in Low Socio-Economic Schools

Another challenge that teachers face when implementing global education relates to broader equity issues. In a diverse city like Toronto, equity issues related to income and neighbourhood socio-economic standings are especially noticeable, and can create barriers to access global education programming, especially if it is framed as largely a fundraising endeavour. I believe that utilizing a more critical framework can work to connect and engage with students when faced with distinct equity issues. The following section provides a general overview of some of the barriers associated with living and attending school in a neighbourhood classified as low-income. I will then demonstrate that many of these challenges can be addressed by employing the specific teaching strategies and instructional practices endorsed by global education.

The *Three Cities Within Toronto* (Hulchanski, 2006) report reveals neighbourhoods in Toronto that are very distinct in their socio-economic boundaries. This report suggests income polarization in the past 30 years in Toronto has effectively created three separate cities within distinct neighbourhood boundaries, primarily based on household income levels. The report highlights the educational problems of the ‘Third City’, which represents the low-income areas of Toronto. Comparatively, the Third City has the majority of the city’s population under the age of 15; two thirds of its population are visible minorities; it has higher rates of new immigrants; it lower rates of university grads; and it is characterized by more blue-collar employees than cities One and Two – a particularly representative statistic because blue-collar jobs have been steadily decreasing since 1970 (Hulchanski, 2006). The dramatic increase in the number of lower-income neighbourhoods in Toronto has implications for the provision of many government and community services, especially related to education and schooling.
For example, Gorski (2008, p. 35) cites several studies that show comparative differences in access to education based on neighbourhood socio-economic status. Compared with their wealthier peers, poor students are more likely to attend schools that have less funding; lower teacher salaries; more limited computer and Internet access; larger class sizes; higher student-to-teacher ratios; a less-rigorous curriculum; and fewer experienced teachers. While these statistics come from American studies, they also reflect the realities of Canadian structures. We see this income disparity can create large discrepancies across neighbourhood schools in access to technology, resources, and highly invested teaching staff.

As Portelli et al. (2007, p. 38) demonstrate, schools are relying increasingly on fund-raising campaigns to provide educational necessities for their school. Not all communities have equal access to disposable income or parent-volunteers. In fact, the People for Education “Annual Report on Education” in 2013 states that the top 10% of fundraising schools raise as much money as the bottom 83% in Ontario (People for Education, 2013, p. 8). Schools in neighbourhoods with a high SES ranking have the base to facilitate successful fundraising campaigns to support school initiatives and invest in extra resources, whereas schools in neighbourhoods with a low SES base are left with a more limited budget from the board.

These neighbourhood inequalities necessitated the development of the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) for successful planning and school evaluation in the TDSB. This Index assists with program-planning and provides the opportunity for teachers to confront their biases in order to fulfill their duty to teach students fairly and equitably (Villegas, 2007). For example, Portelli et al. (2007, p. 47) explain in their report that “some teachers made assumptions that underclass and working class families and of families [sic] of colour were not interested in their children’s education – and some parents were vividly aware of and enraged by
these constructions of their families.” This is a common misconception held about parents of students in low-SES neighbourhood schools (Gorski, 2008). Further investigation demonstrates that these parents often hold more than one job and work odd hours, which makes it difficult to contribute to a standard school setting.

Not all teachers approach working in these environments with similar prejudices or lowered expectations. In fact, Portelli et al. (2007) highlight “the extensive and often exhausting work that teachers and administrators undertook in these schools [to] create workable school cultures, [to] support students and families materially and socially, [and to] develop challenging curriculum that mattered to students.” This planning is also referred to as culturally responsive teaching, as defined by Ladson-Billings (2008). Successful teaching at these schools involves a large commitment from the teacher to design units that promote student-centred learning, that connect to real life skills that develop students’ capacities to create change, and to design experiential learning tasks.

Schools in low SES neighbourhoods confront challenges like this daily. In the final chapter, I will explain how global education is in fact well suited to confront these challenges – despite the perception that global education is ‘extra’ or ‘in addition’ to the mandated curriculum. For now, I want to point out that in an immigrant city like Toronto the income disparity between schools is inextricably tied to the diverse backgrounds of the students. Thus, global education is both more relevant to the development of students’ capacities in low SES settings, as well as integral for fostering cooperation and inclusive practices in one of the most diverse school boards in the world. For example, Portelli et al. (2007) describe a number of schools that have developed curricula focused on teaching students skills such as: how to get along in the world, how to value themselves and others, how to engage in “hands-on activities”;
and how to have “important discussions” rather than “just copying and answering.” These strategies help address some of the issues lower income students face. Recall that these are exactly the types of skills that global education hopes to foster!

In conclusion, despite Jefferess’s point (2008, p. 32) that global education is often reserved for the privileged, it seems that global education in its critical form can be an effective pedagogical framework in schools that are challenged by greater socio-economic barriers. It may be true that presenting global education through an NGO lens with a focus on fundraising will likely not succeed in this setting. However, when the teacher that takes the time to plan and develop culturally relevant pedagogy that embraces the key tenets of global education (such as cooperation, student-centred learning, critical thinking, and empowering individual actions), the teacher will have the tools to create an engaging learning environment where students acquire the knowledge required to be responsible global citizens.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Procedure

This study begins with an examination of assumptions and frameworks found within current research related to global education. In this study, I used informal interviews to connect with teachers to understand their perspectives on global education, and to collect information on their instructional approaches and teaching strategies in order to address global education in the classroom. Through the combination of the literature review and informal interviews, I have explored the main research question: How is global education presented in schools that have been identified at the high-end of the Toronto District School Board’s Learning Opportunity Index?

This is a qualitative study in nature as the research question is explored through individual responses from practicing teachers to offer personal reflections related specifically to teaching with a global education framework. This invokes the structure of a phenomenological research project, in which participants share their lived experiences related to a specific phenomenon, and the researcher uses this data to develop a “composite description of the essence of the experience” that can be applicable to other individuals (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). This approach provides the opportunity to explore a range of current understandings of global education observed in classrooms, relying on first-hand experiences of practicing teachers. I interviewed participants who are currently employed and practicing with the TDSB, and who reflected on their interpretations of global education as well as how they apply it to their everyday classroom.

As with all strong qualitative studies, the researcher is a key instrument in data collection. I conducted interviews in person, at schools in Toronto throughout the fall of 2014 to gather
stories of experience with global education from three current teachers responding to questions that address their instructional approaches as well as their teaching environment. From these interviews, I shaped my research summary in the form of what Creswell calls a “textural description” (2007, p. 61). By gathering multiple perspectives and individual experiences, my goal is to order the meaning of these experiences to draw common themes and learnings from individuals to provide a holistic interpretation of what global education looks like in classrooms facing economic barriers.

In my final chapter, I incorporate the experience of participants with my own reflections on their interpretations and place it within the context of earlier research cited in the review of the literature. By providing a summary of perspectives, I provide recommendations and insight on global education practices as a whole, and for future research.

### 3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

In addition to my initial investigation about global education through the literature review, my main source of data was gained through in-person interviews with active teachers. This setting provided the opportunity to focus on participants’ perspectives, their interpretations, and application of meaning. After hearing about participants’ current practices and experiences, I used this information to explore our understandings related to global education, and how these understandings influence classroom planning and lesson designs. I provided my participants with questions in advance of the interview to allow time for their personal reflection, to uncover subjective views about global education and how it is perceived in a school with low socio-economic rating.
My goal was to frame the interview in such a way to gather stories relating to the context of the participant and their experiences with global education in the classroom. With a phenomenological study, it is important to collect information about the context of the stories, so I sought to hear how these perspectives linked to the personal context that each participant brought to the discussion. Their previous experiences in schooling, with family, and former job opportunities all play important factors in the dialogue.

In this interview setting, I, as the researcher, positioned myself as the questioner first, and listener second (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). I wanted to glean stories specific to the topics at hand, so I prepared a list of set questions and was ready to inquire with additional questions as the interview proceeded. This way, I had the chance to ask further prompting questions in order to flush out any topic that may provide interesting insight related to the main research question.

I have included a list of central questions to guide the interviews as an appendix to this document. Some of the questions look like:

1. What does the term “global education” mean to you?
2. Can you provide any examples of how global education has influenced your classroom lesson plans?
3. What motivates you to incorporate elements of global education in your classes?

3.3 Participants

For this study, I spoke with three active teachers currently working within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). I sought participants who currently teach grades 4 to 8, as my focus is on global education in elementary school classrooms with experience teaching in schools with a low socio-economic rating. In order to determine a low socio-economic rating, I
employed the Toronto District School Board’s Learning Opportunity Index (LOI) as a guide. The LOI indicator accounts for external challenges affecting student success. Some factors include household income levels, level of education of parents, and lone-parent families. Additionally, my participants have some connection to the theories of global education and claim to employ some tactics to incorporate a global education perspective in their classroom. I connected to these participants through personal networks and online forums for teachers in the Greater Toronto Area.

Atticus is an experienced teacher who has been with the TDSB for 20 years. He currently works at a middle school that is placed within the top 100 schools on the Learning Opportunities Index. He has been teaching at this school for several years. He currently teaches grade six homeroom and rotary physical education. His teachable subject is English, and he has a strong love for reading and writing.

Vivien has been teaching at her school for three years, having been with the TDSB for five years altogether. It is also a middle school placed within the top 100 schools on the LOI. She currently teaches grade eight homeroom as well as taking on the teacher-librarian role at the school. She has taught in other schools found at the high end of the LOI.

Elaine has been teaching with the TDSB for nine years. Currently, she teaches at a primary school that is within the top 150 schools in the LOI. She has also taught at a school with a similar standing, in addition to her first years of teaching at a school that was in the top 20 rankings on the LOI. Currently, she works as the teacher-librarian providing programming for students from kindergarten to grade eight.
3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

After completing the interviews, I worked diligently to transcribe them accurately, using the guidance from Saldana (2008, p. 22) and his “codus operendi”. I read and reread the transcribed interview data in order to seek out any common themes that stood out across the interviews from the different participants, initially using different coloured pens and markers to code quotes and stories as they related to different themes. I relied predominantly on descriptive codes which summarize the primary topic of the quote in order to categorize quotes and stories to coordinate themes across each teacher’s narrative (Saldana, 2008, p. 3). After employing the pen and paper approach, I used computerized spreadsheets and charts to organize codes into applicable categories and themes. Using this platform, I was able to translate this raw data into my findings section, and to draw some conclusions and highlight next steps for future research.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

I followed the ethical review approval procedures prescribed to fulfill the requirements of the Master of Teaching research project. The participants for this research chose to be involved by their own voluntary nature, and they were provided with sufficient information about the research prior to making a commitment. Additionally, they had the opportunity to be in contact with me, the researcher, with any further questions or concerns they have about the project. They have been reassured that they can discontinue their participation at any point during the research.

The participants received a copy of the letter of consent (see Appendix A) in advance of our interview session. This provided them with the opportunity to make an informed decision about their role as a participant in the research. The letter of consent explicitly outlines the purpose of the research, the nature of their commitment and the topic of exploration. The letter
ensures their anonymity will be preserved through the use of a pseudonym in the study. The letter also informs the participant the interviews will be recorded. A copy of the letter of consent was given to the participants, and another copy is kept for the records of this research.

The time and location of the interviews was chosen and negotiated by the participants themselves in order to ensure optimal comfort level for the discussion. I did not ask questions about specific students or parents, and provided additional pseudonyms as necessary to maintain the safety and privacy of students in their classroom, or members of the school community.

Participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback or insights related to my analysis and interpretation of the themes arising from the interviews. I want to ensure a fully transparent interview process. The participants will be given the contact information of the research supervisor and will be invited to request a copy of the final product.

3.6 Limitations

It is important to recognize the limitations of this research. First, the qualitative nature of the study with its small sample size for data collection means the findings of the research are not reliable in terms of drawing inferences across a population. Additionally, the teacher participants have limited time to offer a research study of this nature. This limits the depth of information that can be shared in our short interview time periods, restricting the number of questions posed and reflections offered. However, the goal of this research is to investigate the way that a small sample size of teachers employs a framework of global education in their classrooms in a specific SES school setting, so the sample of participating teachers accomplishes this goal.

The breadth of the topics included in this study also adds to the limitations. Providing definitions of both global education and an equity perspective related to the SES of school
neighbourhoods, in addition to then integrating teacher perspectives to combine the two topics constitutes a large amount of information to cover within this specific research structure and scope. These are large topics offering diverse interpretations, so the information analysed here must be interpreted as a specific and narrowly-defined presentation of these topics.

Bias is always present in a research study. My personal history, experience, position as the researcher, assumptions, and relationships will shape my interpretation of the data collected. Phenomenological qualitative research can be challenging as the researcher is charged with bracketing personal experiences from participants (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). This can be a difficult and sensitive process to ensure the participant’s voice and experience is portrayed accurately. Since the information will be gathered in a narrative form from participants, I must be aware that each participant is bringing his or her personal interpretations of the issue at hand, and will be bringing his/ her own bias to the study. Additionally, as the researcher I need to be clear to express how my own interpretations may influence this process.

In spite of these limitations, each teacher offered valuable insights into their classroom practices related to global education. The depth of information and knowledge shared is revealed in the next section, making connections to current research.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consolidates the details and findings uncovered from interviews with three current teachers with the TDSB, making links to the current research. The three participating teachers will be referred to by the pseudonyms Atticus, Elaine, and Vivien. I will present the data following the themes and patterns exposed through our interviews. This includes returning to the definition of global education and what it means to educators, examining teachers’ motives to incorporate this framework into their teaching, concrete examples of units, lesson plans, and instructional strategies used to accomplish this, how the school environment influences these practices, and exploring challenges that teachers may face in the implementation of this framework. Many of the findings confirm the current information as analyzed in the review of literature, but some points diverge from the expected implications. I will highlight these connections as they arise.

4.2 The Basics: Understanding What Global Education Means to Educators

Each teacher interviewed had a different understanding of the global education framework, especially in terms of the topics that could be considered a part of the framework. When asked for sample topics in global education, the interviewees noted collectively such topics and issues as: global warming, geography, developing nations, current events like the Olympics, gender and sexual identity issues, food security, bullying, and financial literacy. From this small sample of teachers, the topics identified can be included under the umbrella of global education are a diverse sampling of economic, social and political issues. The variety of topics
mentioned reflects the current literature that describes global education as broad-reaching (Standish, 2014); (Mundy & Mannion, 2008); (Andreotti, 2006); (Hicks, 2003); (Pike, 2000). While each teacher suggested different topics that may be addressed through global education, there was a common thread in their higher level definition of global education as all interview participants understood global education to be a framework for planning and presenting curriculum, rather than a single subject to be taught in isolation. This understanding aligns with contemporary models of global education as an overall critical framework (Standish, 2014); (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007); (Andreotti, 2006).

As a framework, all teachers insisted that in order for global education to be successful, it must be incorporated into the curriculum holistically. Each teacher distinctly spoke to the ineffectiveness of introducing global issues as an isolated unit. Elaine specifically stated that there is no section of the curriculum documents that point to the unit or strands that address global issues. It is up to the teacher to find subject areas to present these perspectives. All teachers agreed any subject could be presented through a global lens with the right amount of planning.

In fact, interview participants conceived of global education as going beyond the subject matter for specific curriculum units. Elaine said, “Global education could be a good foundation for a curriculum because then you are including everybody.” She appreciates this narrative as a way to draw in specific subject matter to reach all of her students. The global scope increases the reach of topics to make content more relevant to her students, coming from diverse backgrounds. Not only does this quote demonstrate this teacher’s vision of global education as an overarching framework, but it also reveals that she recognizes global education as an inclusive perspective.
that provides the platform for teachers to develop culturally responsive curriculum to address the diverse needs of their learning communities.

4.3 Teaching Values and Skills through Global Education

Building on this idea of culturally responsive curriculum, the teachers in this study emphasized the importance of value-based learning. This approach is aligned with the research of Hicks (2003), Mundy et al., (2007) and Standish (2014). Each teacher explicitly linked global education to the character development education policy that is implemented by the TDSB. Each month, schools focus on teaching a specific value like cooperation, or integrity. Usually, students develop presentations or posters to demonstrate what each value means.

During the interview, Vivien provided the example of teaching about empathy at her school, which is one of the monthly character traits in the TDSB. She introduced a milk-bag project during empathy month, in which she collected 4-litre milk bags to send to an external organization that weaves the bags into sleeping mats to send to countries that have been struck by natural disasters and need temporary bedding. She asks her students: “How do you feel when you lie in a soft bed?” She wanted her students to empathize with people who do not have the same access to things like clothing and shelter that her students do. She said the goal was to teach students about giving “because it’s the right thing to do”, not because they will get a reward for it. Through this type of action-based programming, she is hoping to influence the students’ values and sense of moral duty.

In a similar fashion, Atticus said the global education framework allows him to focus on promoting social morals, so that students can “know the difference between right and wrong, and
despite what everyone else is doing, follow the right path.” His approach focuses on challenging students’ current prejudices and beliefs, and working to promote openness to encourage them to be more aware of “what’s out there.” In this way, he highlights the values promoted by the board, focusing on integrity and respect.

Elaine suggests global education is as much value-based as it is skill-focused, which aligns with the dichotomy presented by Hicks (2003) through the Oxfam global education framework. For Elaine, using global education as a building block for curriculum development means providing students with the opportunity to develop skills that will be useful outside of the school environment and that will work to reduce some of the social gaps created by any social or economic structural standing. For example, she focuses on developing social and communication skills students will need to advocate for themselves as they move on to high school.

For Vivien, skill-based learning means, “bringing in real world learning into the classroom any way you can.” In order for her lessons to be culturally responsive, they need to be practical for her students after they leave school. In this light, she teaches financial literacy with a global lens, addressing government spending and promoting conscious consumerism and personal budgets.

Atticus also reinforces skill-based learning through real-world experience. In his classroom, he focuses on issues that relate specifically to empowering his students to take action against injustices. For example, he explores different controversial topics to teach his letter-writing unit. The summative assignment has students writing letters to the school principal and community leaders proposing action plans to promote change in their community. This way,
students are practicing their writing skills, but are also learning the communication skills and the process of letter-writing campaigns that are commonly used to affect change.

4.4 Students as Activists

Through the examples shared by Atticus, Vivien and Elaine, it is clear that each teacher includes a strong focus of action in their expressions of global education. This approach is aligned to the Canadian interpretation of global education, as defined by Pike (2000). Teachers spoke of action-oriented units that empower students to challenge inequality and promote social justice.

Vivien likes to challenge her students by asking, “So what?” For example, when she introduced the documentary The Bully Project to explore the challenges of social dynamics in the school environment, it was not enough to simply watch the film and discuss it; she would ask her question: “So what? What can we do with the newly acquired information?” In response, the students created dynamic morning announcements to share a plan for action with the school to create awareness about bullying and to work to reduce it within their own environment. Her students were seen as the experts, gathering information, and they were expected to act and work together to promote change. This also exemplifies the student-centred learning approach that is associated with global education and working in low SES settings (Mundy & Mannion, 2008) (Portelli, Shields, & Vibert, 2007).

Atticus also had examples of working with external organizations, like Free The Children, to help contextualize this action approach to global issues. The Free The Children club at his school runs a fundraiser each year to support schools in communities in Kenya. Atticus
takes this opportunity to explore access to education around the world with his students, and to address the purpose of these fundraisers. By focussing on the reasons behind school fundraisers and activities, Atticus is posing to students another big question: “Why are we raising money?” This exploration allows students to examine the broader context and purpose to the school-wide fundraiser. This deeper understanding extends student perspective beyond the limited scope of the NGO, which is key to critical global education according to Tallon (2012).

For Elaine, it is essential to make the aspect of ‘giving’ accessible and relatable to the students. She was part of an organizing team to collect toiletries and small household goods to compile health kits to send to families in Haiti after the earthquake in 2009. She encouraged the students at her school to bring simple items like bars of soap and toothbrushes from the dollar store, making sure to emphasize how useful these items will be for the families in Haiti. For many families in the school neighbourhood living paycheque to paycheque, the teacher understood that giving is more acceptable if it can be offered in small amounts.

Each of the teachers focused on the cooperative nature of action and giving, linking back to value-based global education as outlined by Mundy et al (2007) and Hicks (2003). This is especially important for the environments in which these teachers work. Since the schools rank high on the LOI index, this suggests that many families may not have much individual capacity to offer fundraising campaigns. Teachers frame these campaigns as a group effort, so every little contribution is a valuable addition to the group goal. It is essential that these action-oriented plans are accessible for all students in the community, so students have an equitable opportunity to feel empowered and feel like they are making a difference.
4.5 Examples of Class Content Through a Global Education Lens

In addition to some of the fundraisers described above, each teacher had many examples of utilizing the global education framework to present curriculum. Many of the examples favoured literature and language arts, which is understandable since two of the participants hold the teacher-librarian position at school, and the third teacher has English as his specialty subject. Although many of the examples provided were literature-related, they were certainly not limited to this topic.

Teachers maintained high expectations for their students to participate in lessons and complete assignments, regardless of the perceived challenges students may be facing outside of the school environment. This is an essential element for successful teaching strategies in low SES settings according to Portelli et al (2007) and Gorski (2008). All teachers believed students could fully participate and succeed within the programs they planned, especially as they counted on the lessons to be culturally relevant and flexible in order to bridge strong connections to students.

4.5.1 Examples from a male middle-school teacher

The first example comes from Atticus who always starts his year with a personal narrative writing unit. He uses the Free The Children “Me To We” nomenclature to frame the autobiography that students will write about themselves. By using the Me To We framework, students are meant to explore “Who I am and how I fit into our big world.” Students are expected to write about themselves, important events from their past, significant people in their lives, family stories of origin, their hopes and dreams for the future, an instance where someone was treated differently than others, what life would be like if it was in another country, and lastly answering the question: “Who am I and how do I fit into this world?” Starting the school year
with this exercise sets the tone for the rest of the year. Not only does the activity serve as the perfect platform to get to know your students in a very diverse community, but as Atticus said, “it really encourages them to go outside of what they see and to look at other parts of the world and what’s happening there.” The connection of local to global is explicit and already challenging students to consider the global setting.

Another example from the same teacher is a unit on gender-based violence and anti-homophobia. He feels this unit is particularly important because it can have immediate effects on students’ behaviour and actions. Atticus says it’s important “to start off by what they’re familiar with and then build upon that.” So he begins by examining different stereotypes that society may prescribe to different genders. Next he pulls in international examples of gender inequality and persecution based on sexual orientation from around the world. Then he draws it back to action-based learning so students are tasked with writing a letter to the principal with an action plan of how to prevent gender-based violence and homophobia in the school community. This unit provides a clear example of a teacher combining key elements of culturally relevant pedagogy with the global education framework. By starting with a local issue, and making connections to similar experiences at the international level, Atticus bridges the best of global education and culturally responsive pedagogy to provide a critical and engaging unit that is student-centred and action-oriented.

Another example of a different topic is his approach to environmental studies. Teaching at an EcoSchool with a lot of attention devoted to internal environmental processes, he says it is easy to get students talking about the topic. Again, he draws on what students know. “Start specific: What do you see happening out there in the environment, what have you heard in the media or from your parents?” After establishing this personal connection he says, “then you can
go broad and huge.” In a similar fashion to the gender unit, the environmental justice unit is explored through an action-oriented lens. Students produce a comic strip that presents an action plan or steps that students can take to reduce their carbon footprint, and live a more environmentally-conscious lifestyle.

4.5.2 Examples from a female teacher-librarian in a junior school

Elaine also had a number of excellent examples of using the global education framework as a way to entice learners in her lessons. She used the 2014 Winter Olympics as a way to frame an entire unit on international relations and unity. She also used the topic to explore credible news sources, and varying national perspectives on gender and sexuality, relating it back to their own community that includes people of various sexual orientations. Using the Todd Parr book collection about diverse families to explore the topic (including titles such as *The Family Book* and *We Belong Together*), she said it was especially relevant to her school community, “Because some students were totally embarrassed to talk about it. [So we discussed] how some of their families would never address it.” Elaine was thrilled to hear her students say things like, “That's not fair! You can't tell somebody who they have to love or who they can't love.” Her understanding of the global education framework as a social justice approach to curriculum allowed her to address a taboo topic, which incited strong feelings of justice for her students. This created the opportunity for students to take on an advocacy role for diverse families.

Elaine describes another successful unit that promotes action from her students. In the spring, she introduces a poetry unit linked to environmental awareness, introducing topics like resource extraction, habitat destruction and pollution through poems. Students learned about the destruction of local habitats in the Amazon rainforest through Lynne Cherry’s book *The Great Kapok Tree*. After exploring the message from the book, the students constructed a tree on a
bulletin board out of recycled materials and any time a student completed an environmentally-friendly action (like composting or picking up litter), the students recorded this action on a leaf to add to the tree canopy. The students connected their everyday routine to a greater understanding of the global implications of their actions. The visual representation demonstrated how quickly small, individual actions can contribute to the success of a larger community goal.

4.5.3 Examples from a female teacher-librarian at a middle school

As another teacher-librarian, Vivien agrees that books can be the key starting point for any lesson or discussion relating to global issues. However, many of her examples of teaching global issues related to subjects other than language arts. She focused a lot of attention on the need to present mathematics through a global education lens and bringing in “real world connections” so topics become more relevant and relatable to her students. She talked about using government budgets from different nations, as a way to compare national priorities. She focused on the need to develop “smart consumers” of her students. This includes examining personal spending habits as basic as buying lunch every day versus packing a lunch. She related these personal spending routines to global education as she believes this kind of budgeting activity can help her students be more aware of their spending habits, and help them to make wise choices with money well into the future. This is a very small-scale understanding of how personal practices can have greater effects on the community and world around us.

Another example of global education from Vivien relates to food security. She was proud to share how she incorporates the concept local and global food security into her math lessons. She used to take advantage of tours offered by the Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto to introduce the idea of food security, working to dispel myths of homelessness and people who rely on food banks. As a side note, she laments her disappointment that the food bank no longer
offers the experiential learning opportunity but she works around this, showing a video to capture much of the same information. After leading discussions about the factors that contribute to the need for local food banks, she has students do some budgeting on their own, using flyers from local grocery stores to quantify food values. This learning segues into discussions about healthy eating options, and the barriers families on strict budgets experience as a result of monetary restrictions.

To round out their explorations, Vivien always arranges a type of food drive or small fundraiser so the class can contribute a donation to a food bank. She stresses the importance of examining these issues closely, “As opposed to just saying: there’s a food drive. Bring in your cans.” Students need to examine the context that creates the need for these organizations. She works with them to develop empathy and to empower them to take action. Again, although global perspectives definitely have a place in the discussions, this unit focuses more on local community and how students can affect change locally. This still connects well to our understanding of global education since students are learning skills related to equity promotion, advocacy and cooperation. It connects them and places them as members of a larger community in which they have the power to act and affect change.

4.6 Challenges Implementing Global Education

Even after recounting various successes, each teacher could pinpoint small challenges to implementing a global framework in their classrooms. The challenges they experienced included the following issues: worrying about the emotional well-being of their students when discussing heavy topics; managing communications with parents; struggling to find the right topics to
connect with students when they are experiencing economic instability in their home life. In these discussions, each teacher brought up the importance of maintaining high expectations of all their students no matter what challenge they are experiencing, which is key to working in an environment with socio-economic barriers (Gorski, 2008). The teachers also spoke about the fine balance of being flexible to meet student interests without compromising the goals of their curriculum plans.

4.6.1 Controversial topics

Each teacher spent some time discussing the challenging nature of specific topics that fall under the umbrella of global education. These topics can be emotionally draining for students to discuss, like child slavery, and some topics like diverse families and sexual identities, are specifically controversial depending on the community context of the school. Other studies (Gallavan, 2008) (Holden & Hicks, 2007) show this is a main barrier for teachers when presenting global education. Vivien says: “If I go on too long about child slavery, I can tell the students start to feel burdened emotionally by it, so you have to kind of balance it.” In a similar vein, Elaine says: “It gets very touchy with what you can talk about.” All teachers stated this means they have to plan their lessons carefully and focus on how the topics are framed in the lessons. Vivien says “if you can frame it and avoid any shock value” then students can stay engaged without defaulting to an immature or nervous reaction when the topic can be quite burdensome.

Elaine says it’s important not to shy away from these tough or controversial topics, even if she knows a student in her class may be personally affected by a specific topic like food security or experiences of war. She says it’s important not to “deny all the other kids” and that teachers should address the topic:
“very diplomatically and cautiously... without pointing that student out. And whatever student that’s a[ffect][ed], you know, [you’re] including them. And whether they are going to pipe up and elaborate and share, that’s totally their decision... not that normal exists except on the washing machine, but [the issue] becomes acceptable by talking about it.”

Elaine sees these thought-provoking topics as a key to link to personal challenges students may be experiencing in their own lives. This is especially enlightening to consider in low-SES neighbourhoods where some students may themselves face these specific challenges related to food scarcity, family fragmentation and so forth. Teachers in this study were able to understand the complexity of presenting challenging issues to students. However, current literature (Gallavan, 2008) (Holden & Hicks, 2007) suggests that teachers are hesitant to tackle tough topics in the classroom because of their personal discomfort or the unpredictability of addressing these conversations.

4.6.2 School-to-home interactions

In addition to presenting challenging topics in a constructive way, teachers also need to consider students’ home life and parental engagement when framing lessons. Vivien says this is important to maintain positive relationships with open communication lines with parents because often, “There’s a broken telephone affect, so [the message] can get lost in translation” in the journey from the classroom to the home.

Atticus says that he sends a notice home to parents when addressing challenging topics, specifically the gender-based violence and anti-homophobia unit. He understands that many parents have different interpretations of how family life should be structured, and he knows that sometimes that does not align with the anti-homophobic messages he presents in this unit. Rather than wait for any broken-telephone moments to arise as he teaches the unit, he likes to be
proactive and keep the parents informed in advance. He says occasionally he will receive phone calls from parents concerned about the subject matter, but once he explains:

“I'm not here to challenge your beliefs, and what you hear in your place of worship. I'm here just to ask students to treat everybody respectfully and to be careful about the language they use. Putting it in that context, I've never had any parent, after saying that, refuse. So they understand. I'm not promoting a lifestyle. I'm just promoting openness and you know challenging students to think about their prejudices and beliefs.”

He welcomes questions from parents, and says he is happy to receive them because that means he knows the parents are reading the messages he sends home.

Elaine has a different approach as a result of dissenting community feedback. She experienced some pushback from her school principal about her diverse family teaching unit. The principal asked her to discontinue teaching the unit, asking her to choose other books and resources because she had received complaints from parents about book choices that showcase diverse family structures including hetero and homosexual family settings. Elaine decided to continue teaching the unit as planned, with the overall expectations from curriculum documents to support her decision, along with support from the union representative at her school. This was her planned culturally relevant pedagogy because she wanted to reflect identities from the greater community.

Elaine said it felt unnecessary to send notices home to explain her library practices when addressing topics that are taboo in her community. She said she would never be expected to do the same thing for other curricular content related to language or mathematics. She wanted to be open and honest with her administrators even when they disagreed, because it is important to her to have an open-door policy. She did not want to feel like she should be hiding what she was teaching. “There are gay families out there. We see them. You're creating a disservice to your child by not talking about it… [Y]ou're setting them up for situations at school that are going to
be unpleasant.” Bringing in these real world identities as acceptable pieces of conversation is important to Elaine, regardless of the feedback she may receive from parents or administrators.

Elaine also shared a different challenge that comes with parent relationships. From her experience, she finds it can be difficult to connect with parents in a meaningful way in schools located in low SES neighbourhoods. This is a common challenge associated with working in low-SES environments, according to Portelli et al (2007) and Gorski (2008). She explains that many parents are working more than one job with odd hours, so it can seem like they are disengaged from the programs at school. She suggested this can affect the success of school initiatives that typically depend on parental involvement, like fundraisers. This can then lead to great equity discrepancies between the “haves” and “have-nots” as described in the Three Cities report (Hulchanski, 2006).

4.6.3 Working in a low socio-economic status neighbourhood

Atticus stated a challenge that comes with working in lower SES schools is that typical fundraising initiatives from external organizations like Free The Children do not gain as much traction as they might in other neighbourhoods where families have greater access to disposable income and thus, can make greater contributions to such a fundraising campaign. He suggested this phenomenon also has to do with the middle school population, in that students in this age group are often more apathetic than younger cohorts, which limits their active participation in this type of organized fundraiser. He confirmed that this reaction to fundraising does not influence his decisions regarding the presentation or content of learning goals in the classroom. It simply means they choose to engage with global education in ways that extend beyond these types of fundraisers. This actually benefits students more, according to Tallon (2012), so students will have a broader perspective on global issues, beyond the focus of the NGO.
Vivien also spoke about the challenges of connecting global issues with students in low SES settings. She related her experiences working previously at a school that had a higher ranking on the LOI than at the school she currently teaches. She said it was challenging to present topics from Free The Children and Me To We that addressed global inequalities while the students in her class had so many pressing concerns about their own livelihoods. She would say: “Don’t you want to know that students are starving in Africa? Meanwhile they’re going home and they’re not sure what they’re going to have for dinner. Or the clothes they're wearing are from the lost and found bin that they took in the morning.” She found it challenging to connect global education through this type of fundraising program with this demographic of students. This is a common experience reported in Mundy et al.’s (2007) study.

**4.6.4 Structural challenges**

Another challenge noted by the teachers is time for covering content. All teachers reported an abundance of resources available to them through the school library or online databases, however, they were definitely battling every teacher’s enemy: lack of time. The time it takes for effective planning and the time it takes to conduct holistic units can be limited, as we all know the unpredictable factors that can arise during a school day.

Another challenge to efficient global education described by the educators in this study relates to resources. Although each teacher interviewed reported they feeling fortunate because to have easy access to a vast collection of resources, it can be challenging to sort through appropriate resources. Elaine explains (in her role as the teacher-librarian), she is always connecting with other teachers in her school to offer recommendations for storybooks that can lead into an interesting topic related to social justice and global education. She commented on the general lack of knowledge about resources from teachers at her school and ways her school
worked to alleviate this, including holding an informational book fair for teachers to explore what books and resources were available in the library, and how they may be used in cross-curricular global education settings.

Each teacher clearly identified the potential challenges that may transpire as a result of their global education framework; however, each teacher expressed these challenges in a reflective manner that has helped them grow as teachers. They did not let these challenges limit their scope or motivation to use a global framework approach for teaching and learning.

4.7 Student and Teacher Engagement

Even when recounting their challenges in presenting global education framework, it was clear each teacher in this study was excited by the potential for rich discussions and deeper understanding that comes from using a global perspective in the classroom. Each teacher saw global education as a personal goal to bring real-world issues into the classroom; the framework was not prescribed by curriculum or school policies. This is clearly reported in all the literature (Standish, 2014); (Gallavan, 2008); (Mundy, Mannion, & Haggerty, 2007); (Andreotti, 2006); (Hicks, 2003). The reasons teachers are motivated to use this perspective in their planning are varied and numerous, including the relevance of topics, the flexibility of subjects, leading to empowering students, a chance to connect with their personal passions, and promoting a stronger connection with students.

4.7.1 Contemporary issues and culturally relevant pedagogy

Each teacher spoke to the flexibility of the global education framework that allows teachers to address contemporary issues that are relevant in the students’ lives, and reflective of
their own community. Atticus said the global education framework, “Makes the curriculum a lot more relevant and also… gives it a lot of depth” which leads to “highly engaged” students. He says without this option, “students would [not] be able to [approach the subjects] with such… profound knowledge and interest.” He sees the connections to subject learning run deeper when students are invested in the topics with purpose.

Elaine agrees that contemporary issues are key to connecting with students because as she says “early settlers in Upper Canada – what connections do any of us have to that anymore?” She is motivated to use a global perspective because she says the kids “need to know, they need to learn.” She believes it is the duty of the school and teacher to teach about relevant and real issues, because if students are “sheltered from the real issues that are happening outside of their very street, in their own community, we’re setting them up for failure.” By working to bring in relevant, real-world issues to her teaching, she creates connections that are accessible for the students, so topics become personal. Incorporating relevant and contemporary issues prepares the students for their current and future contributions to the world.

4.7.2 Empowering students

In addition to the flexibility of addressing contemporary issues, teachers are motivated to engage in the global framework because it builds a stronger connection to students, and creates a sense of purpose and inclusion for students related to their own community, as similarly reported in Holden and Hicks (2007) research. The teachers are developing young activists, and are motivated to see students receptive and engaging with new issues and material. Vivien says, “it’s nice to see they want to feel like they’re making a difference.” Elaine says the active-focus of the global framework helps students realize “they are part of the community.” When they feel like they belong, they are more invested in their projects and results. Elaine says it is important to
foster these feelings early, with the hopes that this passion can carry forward as they grow as students and citizens.

Atticus believes these feelings of empowerment make his teaching even richer, since it increases the connection to students. He likes to make explicit connections for his students about their access to power through these issues. He tells his students, “Even though you may feel insignificant and small, you actually have a lot of power, even as a child. Because what you do can affect others. Starting with your parents.” Mundy et al (2007) also highlighted an influence on the greater community, including a ripple effect for students to influence parental behaviour as a motive for many teachers. Atticus is motivated by helping his students see these connections from their local actions and how they will affect the world beyond them, starting with home life.

4.7.3 Personal passions

Lastly, teachers are motivated to employ a global perspective because it gives them a platform to share about their own passions, and creates new ways to connect with students. As Elaine said: “It’s all us. If we’re excited about it, they will be. If we give them passion to believe in, they will.” While this quote points to the individual responsibility of each teacher, she is also pointing to the opportunity to spread passion for student projects. For Elaine, it is global literacy: everyone who wants to read, should be able to read. And she models this for her students by using books to connect to different global issues, saying, “Its amazing how one story can take you a million different places.” She uses her passion for books and reading to open up the gates to connect with students in a myriad of ways.

The personal connections that come through the global framework are important to keep Atticus motivated. He uses his global programming as a way to model engagement and community involvement for his students. He takes part in school fundraising initiatives, often
nominating himself for “wacky tasks” to help motivate students. For example, for one campaign, when the students reached a certain fundraising target, Atticus promised to put on a dress and wig and sing a Katy Perry song on stage at the celebration assembly. This created a new way to connect with students, to show his passion for humour and comedic performances, as well as pursue a stronger sense of community along the way.

Atticus says the global education framework always helps to learn more about his students. By dealing with challenging and provocative topics in class, students are pushed to new areas of depth, sometimes surprising Atticus with their reactions. After exploring the ideas of what classrooms may look like in the future with his class, Atticus says, “they’re not the generation we think they are.” Using global issues and provocative topics in class, he is constantly pursuing his goal to remain a life-long learner by learning from his students.

4.8 Conclusions

Hearing the perspectives from three practicing teachers confirms many of the conclusions already established by research. Teachers are choosing the specific topics they wish to include in the global education framework, which means no two teachers had similar programs. This confirms the fragmented presentation we see of global education.

The teachers used different approaches to integrate global education successfully, alternating between the soft and critical approach in their own classroom plans. Some exercises focus on celebrating diversity, which others promoted a specific critique of current structures, and include an action-plan to help resolve an equity issue. Despite facing several common challenges associated with the integration of global education, each teacher had their own
method of coping or working through the challenge. These teachers did not let these challenges limit their approach to global education in their classrooms and schools.

In addressing these challenges, the teachers demonstrated their successful integration of global education in low-SES settings. In fact, these teachers proved to use global education intentionally as an asset, using this specific pedagogy as the way to form culturally relevant lessons to engage more deeply with their students.
Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Fragmentation of Global Education: A Blessing and Curse

The insights of the three teachers in this study suggest that teachers are not limiting their action-based global education because of any neighbourhood factors, including low SES standings. Because each teacher’s action plan focuses as much on teamwork and cooperation as it does giving and fundraising, the curriculum and proposed activities are accessible to all students. Encouraging students to work together to reach their goals, and insisting that every little bit helps, means that each student can feel connected to the action promoting positive change. Additionally, since the action pieces are based in skill development, students are able to measure their own progress and contribution as a part of the movement towards affecting change in the greater world.

There are many similarities between each of these teachers’ understanding of global education and how this relates to the existing literature and current research. Each teacher’s interpretation of global education draws from elements of both soft and critical global education, with some variation. Atticus states that his motives to include a global education framework stem from our privileged position as Canadians with a moral obligation to challenge injustices, understand global perspectives and discover how we can help those in less developed countries. The celebration of diversity and perception of Canadians as being in a privileged position to help incites elements of soft global education. This teacher’s focus on challenging injustices promotes the tenets of critical global education.

Similarly, Vivien is motivated to include the global education framework as a means to promote intrinsic giving. She wants her students to appreciate the privilege they come from, and to build their capacities to give back because it is the right thing to do, not because they will
receive a reward for it. This aligns closely with the goals of soft global education. However, her determination to provide a holistic overview of the charity campaigns led by NGOs, as a means to provide background knowledge and space for students to consider the broader effects of these campaigns, draws from critical global education.

Lastly, Elaine is motivated to use a global education framework to focus on skill development so her students are empowered to identify injustices. She also uses the framework to promote the connections between local issues and global repercussions. This approach draws from the tenets of critical global education.

These fragmented interpretations of global education are beneficial and problematic all at the same time. Each interviewee highlighted the advantages of the flexibility of a global education approach. Each teacher had the capacity to personalize their global education experiences to reflect the needs and interests of their students. However, the broad scope and lack of cohesiveness in defining global education or producing materials is overwhelming, especially for new teachers or teacher candidates to engage with such an open-ended framework. While experienced teachers benefit from the broad scope, there is a need to provide a more targeted definition, or at the very least to provide more professional development opportunities for teachers to explore the framework.

5.2 Shift to Critical Global Education

The teachers interviewed have carved out a unique approach that incorporates elements of critical global education into their fundraising charity drives. They successfully link learning to action as a means to promote change for the good. The forms of action they promote are group-based, and therefore accessible to all students. Regardless of if a student can provide
monetary or resource donations, all students can participate in learning opportunities and affect change in attitudes through their behaviours and efforts.

Even though these teachers demonstrated that fundraisers can be accessible and provide a platform for critical discussion and learning, there are still limitations to the means NGOs use to fundraise and conceptualize giving. Vivien and Elaine described the challenges they faced when using NGO fundraisers as an approach to global education issues. Fundraising in low-SES school settings created a barrier for students because of financial stress.

Based on the research and insight from teachers in this study, there is a need to move away from the focus on fundraising and poverty reduction as the main identifiers of global education. This will encourage a shift away from the “soft” side of global education that reinforces the “have vs. have-not” binary, invoking the need to send money abroad. This interpretation of global education can be detrimental because the limited narrative excludes many students from engaging in global education because of financial restraints, along with reinforcing colonial and neoliberal power structures that only further exacerbate the international inequities global education is supposedly working to reduce (Jefferess, 2012).

It is inappropriate to teach students in Canada they are more fortunate than their counterparts in developing parts of the world because of access to wealth, and this fortune requires them to send money to help solve problems in developing regions. First of all, this detracts from the solidarity that global education attempts to support. By associating wealth with the power to give (in this context), students see the unequal international relationships defined by dependence on foreign aid from wealthier countries and charity as the norm.

Secondly, this binary relationship of “us” the fortunate, giving to “them”, the unfortunate, diminishes the lived experiences of Canadian students who personally experience levels of
poverty or lack of access to wealth. This may be a difficult shift to encourage, given that fundraising and charity is so closely linked to our current conceptions of global education. But to truly encourage and promote critical global education and promote positive structural changes to our international relationships, this radical thinking needs to become the preferred approach.

5.3 Combining Global Education and Culturally Responsive Pedagogies

Interview responses demonstrate that fundraising is neither the only, nor the main, method used to incorporate a global education framework. Overall, the teachers interviewed engage in global education in low-SES settings in a manner that reflects the strategies outlined by Portelli (2007) and Ladson-Billings (2008). These teachers demonstrate that a combination of global education and culturally responsive lesson plans proved to be a successful pedagogical approach to engaging with students. The teachers are bridging the best of both worlds to create dynamic, culturally reflective pedagogy presented through a global lens, embracing student-centred learning, promoting cooperation rather than competition, demonstrating the influence and power of individual actions.

The tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy as laid out by Portelli et al. (2007) and Ladson-Billings (2008) create a constructive alliance with the global education framework. Ladson-Billings suggests that culturally responsive teaching is a framework, more “a way of thinking” rather than a “thing to do” (2008, p. 163). This research calls on teachers to question the fairness and accessibility of current structures, and how that affects student success. Culturally responsive pedagogy guides the teacher to deconstruct prescribed curriculum in order to represent it in a form that includes relevant examples from the lived experiences of teachers and students. This is a key element in global education as well: working to question current
structures that produce inequalities. Through both frameworks, teachers are preparing students “to combat inequity by being highly competent and critically conscious” (Ladson-Billings, 2008, p. 164).

Another common element in both pedagogies is the call to recognize students as resilient and capable. Teachers need to view their students as full of possibilities in order to achieve common goals. Just as global education espouses the efficacy of individual action, culturally relevant teachers need to ascertain their students have the capacity to affect change, despite facing a number of external challenges. Local cultural perspectives should be used as a means to introduce a curriculum topic, and then be connected to a broader international structure to reflect global interdependencies. Next, students can develop an action plan to influence positive change, exemplifying the cohesiveness of culturally relevant pedagogy using a global lens in a low SES setting.

Global education is in fact well suited to confront the challenges faced by students in low SES settings. This is particularly relevant in a city like Toronto, with the Toronto District School Board representing one of the most diverse student bodies in the world. Despite the perception that global education is ‘extra’ or ‘in addition’ to the mandated curriculum or beholden to a student demographic defined by privilege, global education is both more relevant to the development of students’ capacities in low SES settings, as well as integral for fostering skill-based learning including cooperation and inclusive practices. As demonstrated by the curriculum practices of the teachers involved in this study, developing a culturally relevant pedagogy that embraces the key tenets of global education like cooperation, student centred learning, critical thinking, and empowering individual actions, will create an engaging learning environment that will develop critically conscious global citizens.
5.4 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

There are a number of limitations to this study that I would like to point out. These limitations, although discussed more extensively on p. 32 (Chapter 2), are reiterated here for the reader’s convenience. These are: a small sample size (i.e., only three teachers participated in this study); that the data collected, because of the small sample size, may be only outliers in a more general trend; and that each interview was only approximately 30 minutes long and therefore provided minimal depth into the practices of integrating global education. However, this study’s purpose was not to provide a general overview of the integration of global education framework, but instead, to seek three individual, unique perspectives in a focused area of the best ways in which the global education framework can be used in classrooms that face greater socio-economic barriers to student success.

This study reveals there is much to be learned about global education practices in low SES school settings. To build on the knowledge attained from this study, I have included a list of considerations for future research which reflect some of the limitations of the current study due primarily to scope and time.

- *Increase the sample of teachers surveyed.* Seeking conversations with more teachers will expand the knowledge base of global education practices in low SES school settings beyond the perspectives of three teachers.

- *Include stricter parameters to define low-SES settings.* The teachers in this study worked in schools within the top 100 schools on the TDSB LOI list, which encompasses a large range of socio-economic access. Future research should narrow this scope to uncover
greater details related to the challenges and successes of working in a low-SES environment.

- *Look beyond the TDSB setting.* Are similar patterns evident in the Toronto Catholic District School Board? Do comparable patterns persist outside of central Toronto? Are patterns consistent in other urban centres across Canada? How do the conclusions compare to rural settings?

- *Include the student perspective alongside insights from teachers.* Speaking to students to understand their perspectives related to successful global education integration in low-SES settings will provide valuable insight about the effectiveness of the framework in addition to uncovering new understandings related to soft and critical global education practices.

- *Inquire about professional development opportunities* that currently exist for practicing teachers to acquire greater knowledge of global education.

- *Engage more specifically with teachers on their perspectives of soft versus critical global education,* the benefits and challenges of each approach, and best practices moving forward.

- *Further investigate the link between culturally responsive pedagogy and global education.* A study that specifically compares and analyzes the two approaches, their common elements and best practices will reveal greater details about the value of combining the two frameworks.
5.5 Implications and Recommendations for Future Practice

Teachers in this study do not rely on pressure or guidance from their administrative teams to introduce a global education framework. The individual and intrinsic motivation to integrate global education is confirmed in current research as well. This, combined with the general lack of professional development available related to global education (for current teachers and teacher candidates) will influence my plans for future practice so that I will work to share the information I have gathered through this study. Since I have personally had several international experiences, including the opportunity to teach abroad, I take this as a duty to share my global experiences and my passion for global education, in hopes of providing some inspiration for my colleagues to consider this framework as useful to classroom pedagogy.

Additionally, I will use the culturally responsive pedagogy approach as I make my curriculum plans to integrate global education. This means I will recognize that not every unit or lesson plan that uses the global education framework will succeed in every school environment. I will be able to make specific adjustments based on the group of students in each class in order to tailor the instructional strategies and topics introduced to reflect the needs and lived experiences of my students.

Furthermore, I have compiled a list of recommendations based on the review of the literature and the insights of practicing teachers to provide direction for future practices related to global education, including teacher-training processes.

- *Increase opportunities within schools for collaborative planning.* By scheduling planning time for shared collaboration, teachers will be able to share personal knowledge and experience from international experiences, which develops broader perspectives and more examples of international issues to be included in global education framework.
Teachers will also have the time to share best practices for integrating global education framework into the classroom.

- **Develop a coordinated system for sharing resources** related to global education to add some clarity to the fragmented understanding and approach to global education. This could be developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education, or could be housed at the school board level. A bank of global education resources could reduce some of the challenges associated with incorporating a global education framework into the classroom. Specifically, there is a need to develop more resources to bridge global education into math programs.

- **Promote the link between global education and culturally responsive pedagogy** so teachers can explore effective ways to engage with global education in schools in low SES settings.

- **Increase professional development opportunities related to global education.** Teachers and administrative staff need to extend their knowledge of action plans beyond the straightforward fundraiser generally associated with global education. Priorities need to shift to invest in professional development to provide teachers with the opportunities to explore and devise action plans that work to question current structures rather than reinforce them, to promote active solidarity across international boundaries, and that promote positive change at the local and global levels.

- **Increase explicit training in global education, especially in initial teacher education programs.** This should include opportunities make global connections between international training programs, with opportunities for teacher candidates to study abroad.
It should also be deliberated that international experience is considered a prerequisite for applications for teacher training.

5.6 Conclusion

This study sought to examine and reveal the teaching strategies and instructional approaches teachers use to introduce global education at schools facing high levels of external challenges related to socio-economic status. The data collected in this study presents the hypothesis that the best integration of global education in schools in low-SES settings also relies on the integration of culturally relevant pedagogical practices, providing an alternative plan for action to replace the dependence on fundraising activities as a connection to global action. These strategies include student-centred learning, belief in the efficacy of individual action, a focus on skill-development, bringing real-life issues into the classroom, considering multiple perspectives, and providing a platform for critical analysis and deconstruction of current structures that reinforce inequalities. Teachers in this study reported that the combination of these frameworks provides a unique foundation to present engaging curriculum that students find meaningful. From this study, the findings suggest that global education is not a practice that is limited to the privileged; in fact, it is an effective framework that responds to the specific challenges faced by schools in low-SES settings. This kind of research study provides the groundwork for an instructional approach designed to develop engaged citizens who are connected with both the local and global community, and are ready to take action against social, political, and economic injustice.
References


Hulchanski, J. D. (2006). *The Three Cities Within Toronto.* Toronto: Cities Centre & Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.


http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ElementarySchool/Theclassroom/CharacterDevelopment.aspx


Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ___________________

Dear __________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. As part of a major assignment for completion of this program, we are required to investigate a topic related to an education practice of our choice. I am studying the strategies and tactics employed by teachers to introduce aspects of global education into their classrooms at schools in neighbourhoods with low socio-economic ratings. I think that your experience working in a school with this particular socio economic setting combined you’re your interest in promoting global education will provide valuable insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My course instructor who is providing support for the process this year is Dr. Arlo Kempf. My research supervisor is Dr. Janet Markus. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of one 60 minute interview that will be audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. We can meet face-to-face at your office or workplace, in a public place or a space on campus. I would be happy to set up a virtual interview via Skype as well.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not publish your name and instead, will provide a pseudonym to disguise your identity. In addition to your name, I will take steps to edit or omit any other personal details that may identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor.

You are free to change your mind regarding your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the audio recording of our interviews after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,
Researcher name: Audrey Madsen

Phone number, email: (416) 605-1815; audrey.madsen@mail.utoronto.ca

Instructor’s Name: Dr. Arlo Kempf
Email: arlo.kempf@utoronto.ca

Research Supervisor’s Name: Dr. Janet Markus
Email: janet.markus@utoronto.ca

Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Audrey Madsen and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name (printed): ___________________________________

Date: ______________
Appendix B: Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. I appreciate your time. This interview will take about forty minutes, but you may ask to stop the interview at any point. The purpose of this conversation is to talk about your perspectives and experiences incorporating aspects of global education into your classroom. This interview is part of an educational study that is required as part of the Masters of Teaching program at the OISE, University of Toronto. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your experiences here.

I'd like to ask for your permission to record our conversation. This will help me to give you my full attention now and return to our conversation later. The interview is confidential, and only the research team and I will have access to this recording, which I will transcribe. If you wish to stop at any time, please feel free to let me know.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Background information:

1. What is your name and what is your role at the school?
2. How long have you been teaching for?
3. Can you describe the community your school population comes from?
   a. How involved are parents in their students’ success at school?

General understanding of global education:

4. What does the term “global education” mean to you?
   a. When have you heard the term used?
   b. When have you used the term?

Classroom planning and student experience

5. What does global education look like in your classroom?
6. Can you provide any examples of how global education has influenced your classroom lesson plans?
7. What strategies or tactics do you employ to encourage students to take on this global perspective?
8. What strategies and tactics have been most helpful? Least successful?

9. Can you speak to your students’ level of interest related to the global education framework?

10. Have you used fundraisers or external programming to address global issues in the classroom?

   a. What are some of the most useful resources supplied for you?

11. Are there any resources you wish you had access to in order to incorporate global education more/better in your classroom?

**Challenges to incorporating global education**

12. Does the socio-economic make-up of your school affect your decisions to incorporate a global education framework in your classroom?

13. Does the socio-economic make-up of your school affect the strategies and tactics you employ to incorporate aspects of global education in your classroom?

14. Have you considered what changes, if any, you would make to implementing similar lessons and units within a different socio-economic setting?

15. Have you experienced any limitations to introducing a global education setting specifically related to socio-economic factors of your school community?

**Personal motivations related to global education programming**

16. What motivates you to incorporate elements of global education into your classroom planning?

17. Can you describe the support you may receive from other staff members or from school administrators in order to employ these tactics?

18. Can you describe other global education programming that goes on in the school (whether in classrooms or schoolwide)?

**Closing question/comments**

19. Do you have any other insights relating to global education as a theme, or relating specifically to your experiences at school that have not been covered in the scope of my interview questions?