
CHILDREN'S GLOBAL THINKING

**Research Investigating the Engagement of
Seven- to Nine-Year-Old Children With Critical
Literacy and Global Citizenship Education**

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6 Recommendations

This research project was conducted with the purpose of informing the development of teacher support materials in the area of critical literacy and global citizenship education. Accordingly this chapter provides recommendations for such development arising from the findings and discussion set out in chapters four and five respectively.

1. *Deeper and broader understandings of poverty:* The children in this study tended to understand poverty as a denial of all basic needs and only in the context of certain global locations. Exploring poverty in different circumstances and different contexts may support children's engagement with the complexity of global and justice issues.
2. *Wider world knowledge:* The findings of this study indicate that children's knowledge of the world tends to focus on the Global North and Africa and that their understanding of African countries is informed by fundraising campaigns. In doing so, they support calls for education which widens and deepens children's knowledge of developing countries and which supports awareness of the emerging economies.
3. *Exploring our global relationships:* The findings highlight the dominance of aid in children's understandings of the links between people in Ireland and people in the Global South. This suggests the importance of exploring the concept of interdependence in global citizenship education.
4. *Moral reasoning rather than moral messages:* The study affirms children's capacity and enthusiasm for philosophical discussion, yet suggests that ethical behaviour is taught to the children through a dogmatic rather than exploratory approach. The study suggests that space be provided for children to discuss moral and justice issues through open philosophical discussion, rather than conclusive directions.
5. *Global learning to accompany critical literacy:* The study illustrates the challenges in conducting critical literacy work using representations of distant and unfamiliar contexts. In this sense, it finds that critical literacy is most easily conducted in relation to local texts. However, the findings, which highlight children's adoption of essentialised depictions of developing countries, point to the importance of critical literacy in relation to text reflecting global unfamiliar realities. Accordingly, in this context global learning is essential to support and complement critical literacy skills. Including multiple and alternative perspectives on places around the world is required to challenge and complexify children's understandings of developing countries and support their critique of dominant images.

6. *Emotional and positive environmental education:* The study's findings suggest that the environmental education experienced by the children has focussed on their environmental responsibilities. An approach that supports children's attachment to the environment, including their emotional, social and cultural connections, is recommended to complement the focus on environmental care and conservation.

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