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TEACHER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Global education and intercultural awareness in eTwinning

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Abstract: Students today are facing a global society which is interconnected. This necessitates competencies in digital and cultural integration skills to become successful global citizens. This study reviews the benefits and challenges of global education and intercultural interaction amongst students participating in eTwinning projects between various European countries. Teachers from different countries were interviewed. Their varying perspectives were analysed through a thematic approach. The results demonstrate that teachers perceive eTwinning as contributing towards the enhancement and development of global education through intercultural interaction. This study has confirmed the importance of equipping students with twenty-first century skills and the important role eTwinning plays in this, as well as indicating main challenges which need to be addressed to enhance globalisation as a dynamic concept. Teachers are leaders and agents of social change, yet this research shows they lack any formal training to teach in multicultural societies and in promoting global competencies.

Subjects: Computer Science; Education; Social Sciences

Keywords: global education; eTwinning; teachers; intercultural; education; global citizenship

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Rose-anne Camilleri is an eLearning Support Teacher in Maltese primary schools. Her role is mainly that of supporting teachers in their pedagogical integration of technology in the classroom. She also provides professional development and training for the school staff. She has conducted several online seminars both for teachers in Malta as well as in Europe. She has also designed and moderated a fully online course for Maltese teachers in the use of mobile devices in education.

Rose-anne Camilleri has read for an MSc in eLearning Interactive Teaching Technologies (Ulster University, Northern Ireland) and is currently a PhD candidate in e-Research &Technology Enhanced Learning (Lancaster University, UK). Accordingly her research interests have drawn her to the field of technology enhanced learning and pedagogy in the early years. She is also interested in global education and how teachers perceive its benefits and challenges. She has also presented research at the international conference—*Teacher Education Policy in Europe Network in Malta* (TEPE 19–21 May 2016).

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This research paper focuses on the importance of global education and intercultural awareness in the classroom. It highlights the benefits and challenges which teachers face with special focus on teachers in eTwinning. eTwinning is a networked community for schools all across Europe. It offers a platform for teachers to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and be part of an exciting learning community in Europe. The study presents how eTwinning supports the global citizen concept and enhances twenty-first century competences as well as suggests recommendations to overcome challenges.

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1. Introduction

Globalisation is a phenomenon taking place all across the globe as people of different nations communicate and interact more efficiently through technology. International issues and diverse cultures are increasingly being introduced in the classroom through global education which encompasses related terms such as "world education", "intercultural awareness", "global awareness" and "cross-cultural interaction" using "world" or "international" to replace global. This paper will be focusing on the benefits and challenges of global education and intercultural interaction amongst students participating in eTwinning projects between various European countries, recommendations will also be suggested.

1.1. What is eTwinning?

eTwinning was launched in January 2005 by the European Schoolnet. This lifelong learning programme promotes collaboration through technology. It offers a platform (www.etwinning.net) which is safe for educators to connect, develop collaborative projects, share ideas and promote digital literacies. Its goals aim at

> the enhancement of the teachers' and students' technical, language and intercultural skills, as well as the implementation of the European dimension in curricula. (Gajek & Poszytek, 2009, p. 13)

eTwinning accordingly enhances the awareness of the multicultural dimension and the European integration process in students and teachers.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The author, an eLearning support teacher visiting primary schools, supports teachers in their curricular integration of technology. Part of her practice involves supporting teachers during eTwinning projects. The themes of global education and cross-cultural interaction have inspired her to further investigate these cross-cultural exchanges and contacts between students during eTwinning projects, through Internet-based communication tools, as perceived by teachers. This research investigates if and how eTwinning contributes to intercultural awareness and the global citizenship concept which are increasingly considered as twenty-first century skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills [P21], 2004) for future citizens.

The results of this short study will help identify the benefits, shortcomings and challenges in this cross-cultural interaction from teachers' perspectives, as well as contribute to and inform literature in eTwinning with regard to the intercultural perspectives.

2. Literature review

2.1. Globalisation

The literature examined was dominated by the varied definitions and incongruities scholars perceive of the term "global education". Kirkwood (2001) studied these ambiguities, comparing major definitions such as those of Hanvey (1982) and Merryfield (1997) amongst others. In analysing these varied conceptualisations, Kirkwood (2001) found the definitions to be grounded in four major themes:

- multiple perspectives;
- comprehension and appreciation of cultures;
- knowledge of global issues;
- the world as interrelated systems.

These scholars define the global citizen of the twenty-first century as those who "possess high-tech skills, broad interdisciplinary knowledge about the contemporary world and adaptability, flexibility and world-mindedness to participate effectively in the globalized world" (Kirkwood, 2001, p. 14).

In his research Kirkwood acknowledges the change sweeping across the world which is resulting in this new consciousness about the roles of individuals, institutions and nations and questions why the global age requires a global education. In the same paper he concludes that the globally literate individual is considered an educated person in the twenty-first century adding that global education is necessary for a more peaceful world (Kirkwood, 2001).

The author of this paper will draw upon references from Kirkwood's study to substantiate the importance of global education to assist teachers in guiding their students' passage through the twenty-first century.

Kirkwood (2001) highly merits the work of Merryfield (1997) who significantly reduces the definitional ambiguities (Kirkwood, 2001, p. 13). By venturing inside the classroom Merryfield and Kasai (2004) provide an insight into the reality of global education. They acknowledge the way globalisation is changing our lives and how global interconnectedness is usurping national sovereignty, endangering the environment or corrupting cultural norms. We are given a picture of how American social studies' teachers infuse global perspectives in their teaching. Students analyse information from conflicting points of view to develop critical thinking. They use role-play and simulations to bring out diverse points of view, understanding cultural differences and decisions people face. Global interconnectedness includes student inquiry into local/global relationships, events and issues. Global issues, often complex and conflicting, challenge students and present the understanding of a dynamic world. The authors note that many teachers feel unprepared to teach global issues as they never received training during teacher-education programmes. This literature, although based on American educators, is still key in shedding light on methods and ways educators in Europe respond to globalisation and will help to identify the challenges teachers are facing.

Merryfield presents other studies which focus on the preparation of teachers in teaching the citizens of tomorrow (Merryfield, 1997, 1998, 2002; Merryfield & Subedi, 2006). In an empirical study Merryfield (2002) demonstrates the importance global educators have over influencing students' understanding of other cultures and global issues. After closely observing teachers in the classroom, she found a number of characteristic instructional strategies, which despite the differences in curricula, communities and population, were found to be similar.

- Teachers confront stereotypes and resist simplification of cultures and global issues.
- Encourage multiple perspectives.
- Provide ways for students to understand power and how this shapes the world.
- Provide cross-cultural experiential learning.

Henry and Lima (2012) conduct a case study of the implementation of a collaborative, cultural exchange project between elementary pupils in Kentucky and those in Rio de Janeiro, through blog exchanges, photographic documentation and culturally-oriented lessons involving the use of Internet-based communication tools. This paper was reviewed as it is very similar to how eTwinning projects are conducted. The P21 (2004) identifies this global/cultural awareness and development, as an important component for twenty-first century skills and fundamental for future citizens to participate fully in a global society. Henry and Lima (2012) believe that it is not only necessary to equip individuals with new knowledge and skills and be active in a globalised society but also to teach students how to be culturally responsive and tolerant towards others' differences as well. This literature is instrumental in contextualising the themes of global education, citizenship and cultural awareness which emerge from eTwinning projects.

Recent literature (Zhao, 2010), focuses on teacher education, and the challenges globalization may bring to teacher education. Zhao stresses the importance of educating teachers about globalisation, as education has always been seen as a future-oriented institution which prepares "our children to live in an even more distant future world" (p. 422). The author discusses the five main

challenges globalisation presents to schools namely: knowledge, skills, perspectives and attitudes. A new teacher education system is required to address these competencies which are in Zhao's words, "globally oriented" (p. 429).

Hunter, White, and Godbey (2006) designed a global competence model, which is in effect a synergy of intercultural capability, collaboration across cultures, global awareness, historical perspectives, risk taking, open-mindedness, attentiveness to diversity, and finally at the core of the model is self-awareness. These eight dimensions collectively make up global competence. Hunter (2004) defined global competence as "having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, and leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively in diverse environments" (p. 81).

One particular elementary school in America, went so far as to implement global education as an integral part of the curriculum without excluding anything from the standard curriculum. Rather than overloading the curriculum with more content, it was taught the same content but in different ways (Broad, Dorsch, Lyons, & Schroeder, 2011).

This literature research has shown that there exist challenges which are not easy to overcome. These need to be addressed for students to become thriving and practical citizens in our ever-changing society. Burnouf (2004) discusses the importance of developing multiple perspectives as we are unaware of how much we are influenced by our own culture and nationality. We need to experience the world through others' perspectives.

Globalisation, unfortunately brings about inequalities, where the dominant system takes over. Yet this can be confronted through education, developing global citizenship skills where each individual recognises their importance with rights and responsibilities, enabling students to think critically (Lima, 2006), the key to success.

2.2. eTwinning

The objective of the eTwinning action is not only to enable school twinning within European countries but also for young people to equip themselves with technological skills and above all awareness of a multicultural society (Făt, 2012). Competencies which resonate with twenty-first century skills are stepping-stones to a successful future in a global society (Castek et al., 2007).

Language and culture are the main constituents of eTwinning projects. Through language comes culture, for while communicating students learn about each other. This is examined in an eTwinning publication which reflects on language learning and cultural identity during collaborative projects through interviewing a number of teachers (Crawley, Gerhard, Gilleran, & Joyce, 2008). While interacting students bring in their own "cultural capital" identifying their own cultural elements. Subsequently students not only become knowledgeable of other cultures but also conscious of their own identities.

2.3. Theoretical framework

Hanvey (1982) defines five global dimensions which prepare students for global awareness: perspective consciousness, state-of-the-planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics and awareness of human choices. The author examines these perspectives to contextualise the research carried out. These dimensions prepare a student to achieve global awareness by understanding and being aware of multiple perspectives, comprehending world problems as experienced by individual countries and communities, awareness of the diversity of ideas and practices, understanding of the world as an interconnected system and finally the awareness of choices confronting individuals and nations.

Infusing these global perspectives in education is considered as an imperative for students to understand and relate global content to their lives seeing their place in the world (Merryfield, 1998).

Merryfield also argues that "teachers' beliefs, values, experiences, their knowledge of globalisation and access to resources to teach it" (p. 366) are also important contextual factors which are to be taken into consideration. By placing students at the centre of global education, beginning with the students' own cultures, connecting local and global injustice and inequities and cross-cultural experiential learning, together create a global interconnectedness.

2.4. Research questions

The author has observed the need for more research in this field of global education, due to its growing importance both in eTwinning as well as in education in general. These are the research questions driving this empirical study:

(1) How do teachers from different countries perceive global education and intercultural awareness in students' learning, during eTwinning projects?

•How do teachers support this awareness and collaboration?

(2) Are there benefits/challenges in this cross-cultural interaction?

3. Methodology and methods

3.1. Phenomenology

The qualitative data is collected from the teachers' lived experiences of eTwinning in the classroom. In general, phenomenology seeks to understand how humans interpret an experience of a lived phenomenon, thus interviews are the best instrument to attain this. Interviews provide data as expressed by the perceivers themselves (Schamber, 2000).

Acknowledging bias in face-to-face interviews falls under the important phenomenological notion of bracketing. Identifying any preconceived beliefs about the research itself and thus exposing oneself, addresses bias. It shows readers how you interpret the data and consequently providing more credibility to the research.

3.2. The participants

Teachers from across Europe attended an eTwinning seminar in Malta. Four of these teachers volunteered to participate in the research, they were informed of the purpose of the study and that interviews would be conducted with each participant. No funding was involved and teachers participated of their own accord. The teachers were given the opportunity to decline if they felt not willing to carry on with the interviews. The volunteering teachers originated from Poland, France (Drulingen), France (Marly-le-Ro) and Malta. The French teachers come from completely different parts of France, one from the outskirts of Paris and the other from a rural area north east of France bordering with Germany. The age groups they taught varied from 4 to 5 year olds and 11 to 16 year olds.

3.3. The interviews

These participants were interviewed using semi-structured and open-ended questions to obtain their perspectives on global education and cultural awareness in eTwinning projects. Techniques such as re-phrasing and probing were used when necessary to elicit more information. Interviews are very effective instruments for data collection, as they provide the acquisition of knowledge through human interaction and emphasise "the social situatedness of research data" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 349).

3.4. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are important as researchers in the pursuit of truth could mean that their "subjects' rights and values" are "potentially threatened by the research" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 51). Ethical approval in this research was sought both from the Social Sciences Research Ethics of Lancaster University, and the participants themselves.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants and an information sheet was supplied with details of the study including the: aims and purposes of the study, benefits of taking part, assurance of confidentiality, how the results will be used and the author's contact details. Establishing one's credentials and ethical position is the best opportunity to establish respect as serious investigators (Cohen et al., 2007).

4. Data analysis and results

The interviews were analysed using the thematic approach through coding and categorising data. In this process codes were categorised and overarching themes applied to reduce the codes. The emerging themes were: globalisation, cross-cultural interaction in eTwinning projects, technology and the role of the teacher (see Appendix 1). These will first be reported, with direct quotations from the interviews and discussed later on. As perspectives are subjective, based on the individuality of the participants, variants emerged although there were also commonalities. The teachers will be identified as T1, T2, T3 and T4.

4.1. Globalisation

Global education for T1 is promoting citizenship wherein pupils discover languages, cultures, countries and people. The curriculum acts only as a support while "global education will truly educate students preparing them to live in a real world because the world is changing" (T3). For T4 global education is "seeing with different perspectives, beyond your immediate class".

Global citizenship is "fighting stereo types and discrimination, how democracy works in different countries" (T1). T4 emphasised the importance of the Internet in this respect as it opens up more opportunities for students to be aware of what is happening in the world around them and thus feeling part of it, by easily integrating and fitting in "not only being a citizen of your own country".

Two of the teachers stated that they were unaware of the term global education or global citizenship as they were never prepared for these new realities, although they are still supporting students in their own way.

4.2. Cross-cultural interaction in eTwinning projects—benefits and challenges

Interaction in eTwinning projects offers students the opportunities to communicate and make contacts. Stereo types of people are reduced through more understanding of each other. In one project students created a European cookbook with recipes from each partner country. Some were surprised that Italians did eat only pasta. In another project students made illustrations of people coming from different countries. French people were drawn with French berets and striped blue clothing. When these were exchanged the French students replied "I am French but never wear a beret or blue stripes! Students were realising the realities were very different" (T2).

When asked about intercultural awareness the teachers maintained the importance of first knowing and accepting your own culture, your own identity, before fully understanding other cultures. They argued that eTwinning contacts with other cultures made the children more aware of their own culture because they had to present their particular customs to other nations. "To talk about other cultures first we have to learn about our own ways of life" (T4).

When kindergarten children are involved this interculturality can still take place as long as "it is made very visible. eTwinning helps motivate the children into learning because they have an audience to share their customs with" (T4). The pupils were learning about their own traditions making them visible through role-play, learning about new technologies by taking photographs and videos and sharing them with partner countries.

Students learn to work in groups helping each other communicate with their partners. T2 commented that this was a real problem in her class as usually French people are afraid to make mistakes and so refrain from saying anything. In eTwinning the students "must communicate especially

during a live conference and this boosts their confidence—it becomes a real live culture they are talking and dealing with real people instead of textbooks" (T2).

This interaction induced students into understanding others, thus equipping them with skills for later on in life such as empathy. Teachers feel children should be "prepared to living or working in other countries with similar or different cultures" (T3).

Teachers brought up examples of how this interaction goes beyond the classroom. In one project grandparents of both partner countries were brought into the classroom. Through a video conference in real time, they demonstrated skills such as sewing and talked about customs which were dying out. One of the grandparents from Poland commented that they did not know what a pomegranate was, so the teacher in Malta took the opportunity of showing the fruit to both the classes teaching both the students and adults present. In the European cookbook project the parents and relatives became involved in the preparation of the book, inevitably they were also learning about the diverse recipes from France and Italy along with the students.

eTwinning also presents different challenges to different teachers. In certain areas students have a feeling of being abandoned and not part of their country thus are very reluctant to start projects due to this lack of confidence. Their employment aspirations do not go beyond jobs their parents hold in one part of France. This is a challenge one of the teachers faces every day and is trying very hard to counteract it by engaging students in eTwinning. eTwinning helps students become more open minded in accepting others "more ambitious, more interested in the world around them and more aware they are not alone and have partners all over Europe" (T2). The eTwinning partnership helps bond these students with other Europeans from an early age.

Not all teachers are aware of the benefits of eTwinning and resist co-operating in projects. "It is difficult to collaborate with other French partners because they are so reluctant. I need a lot of support even in explaining to colleagues the whole concept" (T2).

A deterrent in the beginning of a project is when enthusiastic partners suddenly loose interest and drop out or do not reply to messages.

Some teachers indicated that both students and teachers needed more support to learn digital skills and tools to be able to communicate effectively "we need someone to guide and support us" (T3).

Trying to create an interesting project was also seen as a challenge; one teacher suggested getting the students involved by making them present their own ideas (T3).

Internet connectivity in some places is a great obstacle which hinders collaboration. For very young pupils emails and photographs do not really mean anything but when experiencing a video conference it becomes meaningful—posing a big challenge when Internet does not work properly.

Interculturalism in some instances is hindered by ideals of stereo types or elements of racism embedded in some teachers. "For example if you don't like the Turks and you have Turkish partners you don't feel comfortable and some drop out hindering any collaboration" (T4).

4.3. Technology
As eTwinning does not involve students meeting face-to-face, technology plays a major role in providing communication tools, supporting interaction. "You can't cook without fire and you can't communicate without technology" (T1). Most children find technology naturally motivating and easy to use; in cross-cultural interaction it gets them closer through pictures and videos making it real.

The teachers believe that we have to use "whatever the children are using to influence them and if you want them to listen" (T3). Yet T4 believes technology should only serve strictly as a tool with

emphasis on the pedagogy. Another important factor pointed out by T4 was "… to find the most appropriate tools adapted to that age, especially if it concerns very young children".

Learning about digital tools takes on a new meaning in eTwinning. It is not only learning technology for its own sake but is learning in a context. The students want to communicate, send photographs and create videos and presentations to share with other countries, they want to share knowledge, customs and traditions and so they need to use technology for this purpose. "So now they have a motive for learning" (T3). This motivation for learning digital skills also helps them implement new skills acquired such as using Prezi or Animoto—in other subjects. "My students then surprised the physics teacher by presenting what they learnt through one of these tools!" (T3).

Technology supports interaction not only between students but also between teachers who share ideas about educational systems, methodologies and pedagogies used in the partner schools (T4).

4.4. Role of the teacher
The teacher's role changes during eTwinning projects and becomes that of a facilitator guiding the students. "We have to teach the students to observe and to listen and to exchange thoughts. As teachers we need to support and observe them not to kill their motivation by teaching them all the time, we can sit next to them as not to spoil the fun and support by positive feedback. Wait for them to ask for help" (T3).

T4 emphasised the importance of planning the project and integrating it into the curriculum. "Integrating eTwinning gives a better more enriching product for the children".

5. Discussion of findings

5.1. Phenomenological outcomes
The findings yielded both phenomenological and phenomenographical perspectives as the teachers experienced both similarities and variations, respectively, in their practices in eTwinning (Table 1).

Table 1. Highlights of the findings and results	
Theme	**Finding**
Globalisation	Promoting citizenship
	Multiple perspectives
	Fighting discrimination, stereo-types
Cross-cultural interaction	Cultural differences/similarities
	Awareness of own identities
	Boost communication skills
	Awareness of others—empathy
Challenges	Lack of teacher education in global education
	Lack of support in learning/using digital tools/skills
	Lack of awareness of the benefits of such projects amongst staff members
	Internet connectivity problematic
Technology	Students love to use technology—motivating factor
	Emphasis must be on pedagogy
	Students create content within and for a real live context
	Skills learned are applied across subjects/disciplines
Role of the teacher	Facilitator guiding students
	Learner centred
	Integrate eTwinning within the curriculum

They were facilitating and supporting global awareness in unique yet similar ways. Each individual carries their own experiences, knowledge, critical thoughts and cultural diversity confirming that local contexts and backgrounds of teachers are extremely important in such interactions (Merryfield & Kasai, 2004).

5.1.1. Globalisation

This research establishes the importance of eTwinning as an essential tool in developing global education. Students "will need to function well in the globalized world in terms of competition for opportunities and collaboration with individuals from different cultures" (Zhao, 2010, p. 429). The teachers interviewed, perceive global education as a stepping stone in preparing students for reality, others consider it as an opportunity in teaching students to view the world with multiple perspectives as they become aware of being global citizens, thus reducing discrimination. They acknowledge that eTwinning promotes intercultural awareness through interactions during the projects. The students felt compelled not only into learning about other cultures, but first and foremost into learning about their own identities and cultures.

5.1.2. The benefits

The findings demonstrate how direct interaction dismantles stereo-typing and enhances empathy. The teachers agreed that communication skills between students in the same class, and those in other countries, were improved radically. Students were motivated to talk to their partners, in the process enhancing their confidence and practicing language skills in real live situations such as the video conferences.

Technology is an essential part of eTwinning. This is a great motivating factor for students who are mostly digital natives and thus eager to use technology to interact, collaborate and share. The teachers demonstrated how students become capable of applying the digital skills acquired into other areas of their education.

5.1.3. The challenges

This study also exposes challenges teachers experience namely the lack of support in their schools. For some teachers their colleagues are reluctant to co-operate in eTwinning projects and students are not confident enough in participating and contributing, so they are compelled to devise strategies to counteract this. Teachers lack technical support, proper infrastructure and training in ICT skills to manage projects. It is also evident that many teachers refrain from participating in eTwinning projects because it is not part of the curriculum. All the teachers participating in the research admitted they have to find extra time to include eTwinning activities in the classroom. They agreed that if it was part of their educational programme as a whole school or even on a national level, it would be much easier to find the time and support to integrate it within the curriculum.

This research also reveals that educators are not being prepared to teach for diversity and global interconnectedness, implying the importance of including global education into teacher education programmes as also very strongly advocated by Zhao (2010).

5.2. Research questions

The phenomenological approach has helped investigate the questions set out for this research from the perspective of teachers lived experiences in the classroom. It has confirmed the importance of equipping students with twenty-first century skills as global citizens, and the important role eTwinning plays, indicating benefits as well as challenges which need to be addressed to enhance globalisation as a dynamic concept. This research has also identified that teachers support global education through:

- encouraging interaction;
- guiding students, as facilitators, in their learning;
- developing digital skills to enhance these experiences.

6. Conclusions and future implications

This study has disclosed the lack of preparation teachers have in confronting this new reality. When taking into account that these are the people who are leading the way in developing open-minded-ness, resistance to stereotyping, cross-cultural communication and in essence preparing the future citizen (Merryfield, 2002), it is paramount that they should be adequately prepared to teach in multicultural environments and promote global education (Merryfield, 2000). This lack of teacher education conforms with Hoter, Shonfeld, and Ganayim (2009), who consider teachers as agents of social change and yet argue that they are not being prepared to teach in a multicultural society in effect perpetuating their own stereotypical views.

The results have also raised some other pertinent questions/concepts which require more research to answer or explore:

- What really constitutes global competencies?
- How can we define global education?
- Can eTwinning be a core element of the curriculum?
- Merging eTwinning and global education.

The cross-cultural interaction in eTwinning supports globalisation which to take place, necessitates a decolonising of the mind. Students must look beyond their particular "blinders ... set aside the baggage of colonialist assumptions and see the world and its peoples through global perspectives" (Merryfield & Subedi, 2006, p. 284).

Collaboration enhances intercultural awareness, enabling multiple perspectives of the European dimension and equipping students with digital skills all of which encompass the characteristics of a global citizen (Lima, 2006). Hanvey's (1982) global dimensions are substantiated through: multiple perspectives, students' awareness of diversity in ideas and culture and understanding world problems as experienced by diverse countries. The cross-cultural interaction experienced in the projects, direct communication and active participation, all contribute to creating a global perspective (Wilson, 2000).

The findings inform literature in eTwinning corroborating the goals for lifelong learning (Gajek & Poszytek, 2009).

Teachers perceive the importance of providing opportunities for students to be active participants, teaching them to be aware and tolerant of differences, consequently competent as global citizens (Henry & Lima, 2012). Global citizenship supports the perpetuation of stereotypes and allows for "in-depth acquaintance with other cultures based on common universal values in addition to the unique values of each culture, thus developing a more open, understanding, and respectful dialogue" (Hoter et al., 2009, p. 2).

The analysis of the interviews echoes the characteristic instructional strategies Merryfield (2002) identifies in her observations which have been discussed earlier on. These are also applied by teachers in eTwinning demonstrating how eTwinning promotes global education and global citizenship.

The number of participants was limited as this was a very small-scale study, in effect generalisations were difficult to make. Notwithstanding it was a very enlightening journey enticing the author into continuing research to fill a void in the literature about how the eTwinning action contributes to a global education. Possible areas would be student-teacher preparation in global education, as well as exploring change in teachers' role in the classroom, brought about by globalisation.

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Appendix 1
Sample of some of the codes while analysing transcripts/categorising

Main codes:

Global education, Global citizenship, Intercultural Awareness, Interaction in eTwinning projects, its benefits, technology, tools used, role of technology, teacher support, how?, skills needed, challenges, overall perspective of global education in eTwinning.

Main Themes: (Which emerged after the process of categorising and coding)

(1) Globalisation.

(2) Cross-cultural interaction.

(3) Technology.

(4) Role of the teacher.

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Interviewee	Global education	Global citizenship	Intercultural awareness	Cross-cultural interaction in projects: skills/benefits/challenges/examples	Support from teacher
T1	Promotes citizenship, pupils discover languages, cultures, countries, people	Fighting stereo types, discrimination. It is a sense of engagement sensitivity for pupils like class representative. Means democracy to know how democracy works in different countries, how the European parliament works which is important for my pupils	I want my pupils to know their own culture to know others culture. It is very imp because knowing their own culture well they have a better idea of other culture you cannot say I am French if you don't know there are English there are Maltese. That's why I created my project a European cookbook as cooking is part of culture	*Benefit*: there is a great opportunity to make pupils meet other pupils from very far away Before eTwinning there was no possibility for pupils to meet. It's not the same thing just writing a letter When we created the cookbook they were amazed at what eating habits were: Ah! I thought they only ate pasta but no they eat other things too, they told their parents of this so it went beyond the classroom They realise they are not alone because where I come from is very far and cut off from other French people *Skills*: open minded in accepting others *Challenges*: Yes a big my pupils are aware they are not alone and have partners from everywhere in Europe because in my place they have a feeling of being abandoned in a country far away and employment is very poor I tried to give them ambition and confidence they study up to 17 and try to find a job like their parents no ambition whatsoever/Children become more ambitious with eTwinning more interested more serious to be open to the world	I create a European council/parliament—with class rep I present it to the pupils and present an obligation: ok you want to be a class rep you have to take part in eTwinning project. They have to assume this obligation its part of my job they know I work with eTwinning
T2	Global educ is educ which does not base only on the curriculum and what is important we have to treat the curricula just as a support not as the beginning or the end of our job we have to take the opportunity and deal with the curricula what we think is the most important taking into consideration everything around because then only then global education causes that we educate our students we prepare them to live in a real world not in an artificial world because the world is changing. And the obvious of textbooks just prepare the material some help not everything that we have to run through. Most of the time this is what happens. The teacher takes a textbook or teachers book and it is the easiest way for him to work		This was the topic of our project it was European awareness to lang. The most important thing is to be aware or rather to awake in the young generation the awareness of being a part of a bigger world not just a family they are still members of a family of a country but they are still members of European generation/group and they can go further and further. It is one of the most imp things we have to do because when you look at your students you have no idea where they are going to work in the future it doesn't mean that he/she lives in Poland and they will stay here and it would be easier for them if they meet the other culture and prepare for that there are still differences and similarities between countries not only differences, the lang the culture there are similarities too and we can influence to change everything to be that is we have to realise people are different because it means that the world Europe is very interesting	I think we have to help our students because we have culture it exists it is something what we influence and each culture has its own but we can't argue about difference because we don't know the other culture we can't talk about the culture ex European culture if we don't learn about the other culture that why we have to teach students to observe and to listen and to exchange thoughts because then we can learn the other *Student learning*: Yes it benefits because involvement is much richer and development is more natural if they educ in this global education in culture exchange not only through but through the Internet *Skills required*: They need more ict skills/tools and to move forward and need someone to guide them to support we don't have to teach them all the time we should observe not to kill their motivation. We can sit next to them as not to spoil the fun and understand oh I can do it and it motivates them so we can observe give positive feedback and if something goes wrong or they ask us for help we can be involved in the process *Challenges*: A big challenge is to create something interesting for the children and that's why we have to get their ideas for good projects it has to be their ideas so they are involved	Because I am an English teacher that why I think that contact with real persons from different countries is really important, you can't learn a foreign lang if you don't meet real people in practice that's why cooperate with American ambassador in an American project take my students to the embassy and learn about the different types of the same language English/American. Students really participate in these experiences because it's interesting and motivating

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