

**Global Education in Neoliberal Times: A Comparative Case Study of Two Schools in New York**

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**Abstract:**

Preparing students to live in an interconnected world is of central importance in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Neoliberal educational contexts, however, thwart efforts to implement more humanistic and critical versions of global education (GE). This comparative case study examines how teachers and administrators enact GE at two schools—one public, the other private—in the New York City metropolitan area. Findings demonstrate the constraints and possibilities of engaging GE in neoliberal educational contexts. Implications for GE scholars and practitioners include the study of how wider contextual factors shape GE's enactment in a neoliberal era.

**Key words:** global education, neoliberalism, teaching and learning, global inequity

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**Introduction**

Preparing students to live in a diverse, mobile, interconnected, polyglot, and troubled world is of central importance in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Whereas the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the development of modern school systems that were nationally focused, a need arose in the latter half of the past century to educate about the world, recognizing the limits and perils of nation-centric learning. The drivers of this change include increasing economic globalization, changing patterns in consumption and tourism, dramatic increases in migratory flows, and regular reminders of the biosphere's beleaguered state. Global education (GE), a curricular approach that aims broadly to expand students' global awareness and develop skills to participate in an

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interconnected world (Hicks, 2003), has become a significant dimension of school curricula in many countries (Engel, 2014; Schweisfurth, 2006).

Scholars from various disciplinary perspectives conceive of and enact GE differently. Some (e.g., Gaudelli, 2016) engage a humanistic GE that posits universal values coupled with an embrace of diversity. Others (e.g., Andreotti, 2010, 2014) recommend that GE be rooted in a foundational critique of capitalism with an eye towards upending and replacing this system. Policymakers and the private sector proffer GE as a way of learning-to-earn, or a means of increasing one's marketability in a globally networked context (Engel & Siczek, 2018). GE, therefore, is subject to ideological perspectives that inform and direct intentions, implementation, materials, and activities that are themselves rooted in different ideas about the role of schools in society and the place of pedagogy in those same formulations (Apple, 2001).

One prominent ideological perspective that influences GE is a neoliberal educational context. While aspects of neoliberalism are not new phenomena in the U.S. education system, current state and federal policies emphasize accountability, standardized testing, evaluation, assessment, and strict testing cultures. At least two elements of these policies are neoliberal, including the aims and means of enactment. First, regarding aims, the focus on career market-ready graduates is the overarching rationale for this cocktail of educational policies (as compared to an environment-ready or a peace-ready focus). Secondly, regarding means, the policies embed neoliberal principles including competition, scarcity of resources and measurability/accountability, among others—as the tools by which implementation occurs. Mitchell (2003) notes this neoliberal shift in education in many Western countries, which transitioned from promoting multiculturalism in order to achieve national unity to using diversity to further global competitiveness.

Neoliberal assumptions about education run counter to many tenets of the critical and humanistic visions of GE. Few studies have examined, however, the ways in which the social milieu of neoliberal contexts influence the enactment of GE (Gaudelli & Wylie, 2012). Bridging this gap, this qualitative comparative case study explores the role of contexts in GE implementation. We examine how GE is conceptualized and practiced in one public high school and one independent K-12 school, both of which had well-regarded global programs, located in the New York City area. In light of the city's infamous social and economic inequities and its significance in global capital (Sassen, 1994), we framed the study with critical GE. Through our focus on these two case study schools, we illuminate the challenges and possibilities that emerge

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when teachers and administrators in two schools develop and implement GE by focusing on the distinctive situation of the New York Metro area.

### **Literature Review**

In the past decade, GE scholars (e.g., Gaudelli, 2003; Rapoport, 2009, 2010) have greatly expanded the literature on the development of GE and global citizenship education (GCE) in schools in the U.S. In this section, we explore the literature on the successes and challenges of engaging GE in the U.S., given this study's research site. We also examine how teachers and schools have conceptualized and implemented GE.

#### **GE<sup>1</sup> in the U.S.**

Numerous scholars have demonstrated how different national contexts, such as those of Israel, Canada, and the U.K., shape GE practice (Goren & Yemini, 2016; Marshall, 2007; Schweisfurth, 2006), with each setting offering particular limitations given its history, geopolitical positioning, and economic and social concerns. Gaudelli and Wylie (2012) contend that three main challenges plague GE in the U.S.: a national curriculum, particularly within social studies (Loewen, 2008); the complexity of global issues, which seem daunting to teachers and students; and federal and state policies promoting the standardization of curriculum and assessment of students' knowledge and skills in mathematics and English. Although a standardized curriculum could offer opportunities for GE, Rapoport (2009) argues that GE and GCE have a minimal presence in state standards and curricula. He conducted a conceptual content analysis of state standards to find terms such as *global*, *globalization*, and *global citizenship*, and found limited inclusion of these terms in state social studies standards. Thus, public schools confined by standards and testing may not have the option to include GE, and independent schools without these constraints and public schools that successfully manage standards and testing are better positioned to incorporate GE, fostering its elitism.

Additionally, some attempts to include global perspectives in U.S. education are motivated by national economic and political concerns rather than aspirations to create an equitable global community or protect the planet. For example, Engel and Sizcek (2017, 2018) point out that the

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this review, we draw upon literature in global education (GE) and global citizenship education (GCE). The decision to include both while focusing on GE as the frame of the paper is due to the shift from GE to GCE in scholarship that has occurred over the past decade, contributing to a robust research base in GCE from which to draw. Yet, we wish to honor the way that the educators at both case-study schools named and conceptualized their efforts as GE.

U.S. Department of Education's 2012 publication of an international strategy was more focused on improving students' skills that would better enable them to compete with peers globally and that were "necessary for full participation in the global economy" (Engel & Sizcek, 2017, p. 761). While Engel and Sizcek noted similar economic concerns in other Western countries, their analysis pertaining to the U.S. underscores how a national agenda shapes and at times prohibits GE, particularly its more critical dimensions. However, teachers exercise agency in their classrooms and negotiate their priorities in education along with policy mandates, offering openings for GE.

### **Teachers' GE Conceptions and Instruction**

Despite the constraints on curriculum and other challenges in engaging GE in the U.S., some teachers have managed to bring global perspectives into their classroom. Rapoport (2010) describes teachers' understandings of GE and GCE and their successful translation into classroom instruction. He conducted research on teachers' conceptualizations of global citizenship in the U.S. (Indiana) through interviews with six secondary teachers teaching social studies and language arts, and found that the teachers employed various frameworks and devices in both their curricular and extracurricular activities to encourage greater student awareness of global issues and a better understanding of the meaning of interdependence for globalization.

However, other studies have revealed the tensions between and within teachers' philosophies and goals—which are mostly aligned with GE and GCE—and their eventual practice in the U.S. Framing the actions around cross-cultural awareness, Mangram and Watson (2011) observed only one teacher who empathized with English language learners' perspectives among many teachers who implemented GE in their classrooms. During their interviews, other teachers expressed frustration with these students due to their "language and cultural dissonance" (Mangram & Watson, 2011, p. 109), suggesting that while teachers express an excitement for GE, they struggle in negotiating difference in their practice. Findings from other studies show how teachers have goals to engage students in global topics by emphasizing tolerance and acceptance of others; however, after teaching, student outcomes differ (Hong & Halvorsen, 2010).

Overall, these studies on teachers' perceptions and implementations of GE/GCE in the U.S. contexts suggest that many teachers are willing to engage GE despite the challenges outlined by Gaudelli and Wylie (2012) and are motivated by concerns to involve students in their global community rather than develop global competitors. However, more research is needed to understand teachers' conceptions of GE, their resulting pedagogical practices, and their

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negotiation with the neoliberal social and institutional contexts in which GE teaching occurs. The current qualitative comparative case study, framed by critical GE, aims to contribute to school efforts to incorporate global curricular dimensions by examining conceptions and instruction of GE in the neoliberal educational context of two schools in New York.

### **Theoretical Framework**

GE scholarship provides a framework for how schools and teachers can incorporate global perspectives into curriculum. Themes of the world's interconnectivity, multiple perspectives, global citizenship, connections to the local contexts, and awareness of self and others are predominant throughout GE scholarship (Kirkwood, 2001). Despite these various themes, GE is often attacked for its ambiguity while other scholars contend that GE fails to meaningfully address issues of power and global inequity (Merryfield & Subedi, 2001).

Thus, the current study is conceptually framed by *critical* GE. Scholars of critical GE call for raising awareness around the power dynamics and privileges produced by the colonial and imperial past and present (Merryfield & Subedi, 2001), decolonizing curriculum and teaching (Subedi, 2013), and approaching global citizenship with ethical and informed actions (Andreotti, 2010, 2014).

Critical GE centers global inequity by attending to ongoing colonial influences. Merryfield and Subedi's (2001) strategies for decolonizing curriculum include critical and questioning elements that look "beyond the blinders of American-centrism" and "set aside the baggage of colonialist assumptions" about the world (p. 284). They suggest three ways to reduce the pervasive Eurocentrism in GE and social studies curriculum and instruction: developing students' perspective consciousness, including contrapuntal narratives, and recentering GE to avoid Eurocentrism. Andreotti (2010, 2014) shifts GE's outcomes of students' global awareness to their ability to develop solutions for global issues through ethical and informed action using purposeful language. Criticizing less critical solutions for global issues, she reframed problems such as poverty and helplessness as injustice and inequity. Andreotti (2014) also recommends that action develop from within communities rather than outside communities imposing aid on what they deem to be problems.

While many critical GE scholars focus on the continuing influences of imperialism and colonialism, neoliberalism warrants attention as well by reproducing hierarchal binaries and relationships and affirming discourses that impose norms around work, education, and leisure. Harvey (2007) describes neoliberalism as government-sponsored free market and free trade policies. Neoliberal discourses encourage privatization, individualism, efficiency, and measurability while deriding

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social welfare and the state. A neoliberal subject is “turned into an entrepreneur of oneself, urged to adopt competitive behavior in every domain of life and extremely cautious about the profitability of each of its investments” (Pinsel & Journal, 2017, p. 5). Neoliberalism is thus fitting for critical GE scholars to deconstruct as it marginalizes particular groups and complicates global inequities through its language of consumption, profit, and rationality.

### **Methods**

In order to answer our overarching research question (How do teachers and administrators at two NYC schools conceptualize and enact GE in a neoliberal climate?), we interviewed teachers and administrators at two NYC schools with GE programs and observed teachers’ instruction over the course of two years. We also collected and analyzed relevant school documents, including mission statements and recruitment brochures.

### **Background of Research Sites**

In this qualitative comparative case study, we focused on Renew Global Education Academy (RGEA), a public high school, and World Preparatory School (WPS), an independent K-12 school, at which we engaged primarily with high school teachers and administrators. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) describe a case study as “a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event” (p. 54), and a comparative case study is a research design in which researchers compare and contrast two or more case studies. This study aims to describe how each school case conceptualized and enacted GE and to further develop a comparative analysis of concepts, practice, and policy with regards to GE between two schools.

RGEA and WPS represent significantly different school types within the context of the U.S. and specifically the NYC metropolitan area, offering us the opportunity to understand how neoliberalism shapes both private and public schools in similar and contrasting ways. NYC has one of the most segregated public school systems in the country (Shapiro, 2019), a challenge further compounded by the prevalence of independent schools that attract wealthy and primarily white families (Domanico, n.d.). Recent developments to improve students’ schooling experiences include Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s decision to break up large public high schools into smaller, more community-focused high schools (Barnum, 2019). NYC students apply to public high schools in any of the five city boroughs, offering families a choice in their child’s schooling experience (New York City Department of Education, 2019).

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RGEA is a relatively small public school serving secondary grades with approximately 55 students in each grade cohort. During the time of our study, students were predominantly Latinx or Asian. RGEA was designated as a Title I school, a federal mandate that provides financial assistance to schools with a high percentage of students coming from low-income backgrounds. Most students lived in the local community while others traveled significant distance by public transit to attend, given students' ability to apply to high schools anywhere in NYC. High school students were required to take and pass five New York State Regents Examinations in four different subject areas, including social studies, to graduate, which had particular implications for our study given that these exams required teachers to draw upon prescriptive curriculum and help students prepare for testing.

Our second site, WPS, is an independent school with approximately the same number of high school students as RGEA. Details about students' demographics were difficult to locate, but during our research, the student body appeared predominantly white. Most students lived in the affluent area surrounding the school. To be accepted into high school grades, students submitted teacher recommendations and test scores and were interviewed by admissions staff. Students and their families paid over \$40,000 a year for tuition, comparable to other independent schools in the area, and families were asked to contribute more during a separate annual giving event. Approximately 15 percent of students received financial aid, and decisions for financial aid were based on a family's financial status; if there were not sufficient funds to support all accepted students, those who were seen by WPS as most able to positively contribute to the school were given priority. High school students did not take the Regents exams, but many enrolled in AP classes and took standardized exams for these courses; these AP classes were outside of the GE program and thus at times conflicted with aims to promote global learning.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

After institutional review board approval, we collected data at the schools over the 2015-2017 school years. At each school, we conducted individual semi-structured interviews with two social studies teachers twice, two non social studies teachers once, and one administrator once. We also observed all teachers' instruction twice and invited all participating teachers and administrators to a focus group held at each school. Teachers and administrators were invited to participate based on their involvement in the school's GE program. At RGEA, more than two non social studies teachers were willing to participate because they taught a class in the GE program; thus, we observed these five additional teachers' instruction twice and interviewed each teacher once. Similarly, two additional administrators at WPS had key insights into the school's GE

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program and were also willing to participate in an interview. Teachers and administrators at both schools (see Table 1) had diverse backgrounds—as revealed in their interviews—although there were more white participating faculty members at WPS, constituting more than half of our WPS participants. Participants were asked about their conceptions, experiences, and other institutional and societal contextual factors of GE during their interviews. During our classroom observations of teachers, we focused on the global connections in their teaching. At each school, we conducted a focus group interview at the end of the school year with most participants and asked them to assess the strengths and challenges of engaging students in GE at their school. Finally, we gathered and analyzed school documents/artifacts such as school mission statements and student work throughout the two years. All of the data sources provided insight into how teachers and administrators conceptualized and enacted GE.

**Table 1**

*Research Participants in the Study*

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Name (Pseudonym)	Position	School
Jorge	High school social studies teacher	RGEA
Paul	Middle and high school special education teacher	RGEA
Lindsey	Paraprofessional teacher	RGEA
Yani	High school geography and science teacher	RGEA
Rory	School administrator	RGEA
Corey	Paraprofessional teacher	RGEA
Gabriela	Paraprofessional teacher	RGEA

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Randy	Elementary and high school art teacher	RGEA
Riadha	High school science teacher	RGEA
Doug	Middle school science teacher	RGEA
Miranda	High school English teacher	WPS
Will	Assistant director of Worldviews program	WPS
Valory	World languages chair	WPS
John	High school science teacher	WPS
Vincent	Director of Worldviews program	WPS
Karen	Social studies intern	WPS
Ivan	High school social studies teacher	WPS
Jillian	School director	WPS

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Analysis of the data was recurring during and after data collection. The research team first individually read through the collected data from the two sites and highlighted certain words, phrases, and patterns to be potentially developed as coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). We also met monthly to collectively review data and discuss, identify, and modify preliminary coding categories. These categories helped us determine three themes around GE at each school: the ambiguity and situated quality of GE, external pressures felt by teachers and administrators, and divergent practices of GE at each school site. We also conducted member checks with each school, asking for review and comments on identified themes. Finally, for the purpose of

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comparative case analysis, we compared and contrasted similarities and differences of themes across the two school cases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). These three themes of each case and comparative analysis of two case studies are discussed in the following findings and discussion and conclusion section.

### **Findings**

#### **The Ambiguity and Situated Quality of GE**

Teachers and administrators at WPS and RGEA defined and envisioned GE differently. Several scholars (Kirkwood, 2001; Pike, 2000) have described the conceptual leeway GE offers practitioners, allowing the schools to each create a unique bricolage of GE that reflected the needs and perspectives of school community members.

At WPS, most teachers believed that GE was a means of understanding how people around the world live based on different, but not inferior, values. When asked about her conceptions of GE, Karen offered: “The first thing that comes to mind is the word empathy—trying to understand other cultures in their contexts and being able to think from other perspectives.” Her remark suggests one of Hanvey’s (1982) dimensions of a global perspective: cross-cultural awareness. He argued, “If we are to admit the humanness of those others, then the strangeness of their ways must become less strange” (p. 165). This cross-cultural awareness was central to WPS teachers’ conception of GE and a means of encouraging students to see others as agents of their lives.

Seeing beyond their immediate environment was a particular concern for most teachers. They underscored the importance of developing students’ global awareness particularly because of their economic privilege. Teachers tended to focus more on class, although students also occupied other privileged positions in terms of race (predominantly white) and nationality (predominantly U.S.). Valory, for instance, shared,

There’s a lot of privilege here. We’ve got some very lucky students who get to travel for pleasure, and so their perspective is different. They’re great and smart kids, but they have limited experiences. Some have never ridden the subway—their lifestyle doesn’t require it.

Valory explored how students engaged with some aspects of GE by sharing that students were, on the one hand, able to develop some sense of global awareness through travel because of their affluence; however, their wealth also precluded them from partaking in routine experiences for most New Yorkers.

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Several teachers cautioned that students' ability to travel internationally might facilitate a superficial rather than critical global perspective. Karen offered, "They've traveled to Africa, they've gone to Paris [with their families], but they only understand a tourist version of things." Her comment contrasts with teachers in Goren and Yemini's (2017) study who considered international travel with family as paramount for students' global citizenship. Karen further explained that WPS's international travel programs offered a more meaningful global perspective by having students learn more about local cultures by visiting local schools, for example. While these travel programs intended to challenge students' superficial perspectives, the assumption that students need to see different cultures abroad suggests the privilege of choosing to see others who have not given their consent or cannot afford the same opportunity (Gaudelli, 2011).

The preference for understanding other cultures was further evidenced by the content of WPS's international travel programs. Several teachers emphasized that students were not engaging in community service abroad. Vincent explained, "They don't come to these [international settings] to save anybody. They go there to understand how people see the world from their point of view." His comment suggests an awareness of a larger discourse critiquing development and NGOs in less-developed countries (e.g., Ferguson, 2006) and his efforts to prevent students from being seen as Western saviors.

In contrast, teachers at RGEA held conceptions of GE that often diverged. Some teachers, Jorge in particular, conceptualized GE as situated in power discourses; Jorge frequently invoked Freirean dialogue (Freire, 2000) as an important tool in helping students understand how power operates, particularly within global systems. Part of understanding power within global systems, for him, meant prioritizing the voices of marginalized groups, which contrasted with WPS teachers' less critical call for multiple perspectives (Andreotti, 2014). He offered his thinking on GE: "If we're going to talk about global citizenship and global education, it's important to start completing the picture and amplify the voices of indigenous cultures in our classrooms." For Jorge, an awareness of different cultures needed to include recognition of how power operates and privileges some at the expense of others.

Other teachers sought to amplify the causes and challenges of poverty, an issue shaping many students' lives given the school's Title I status, to connect students with global issues. Lindsey explained, "We do a lot of community service work with a focus on the environment and poverty" as a way to integrate practices with the school's broader mission. She shared that one of her classes cleaned a nearby beach, and through this project students learned of the cultural

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dissonance between a local Hindu community's practice of religion and city officials around the creation of beach pollution.

Finally, RGEA teachers frequently cited the students' diversity as an asset in developing their global awareness. Paul suggested that the neighborhood context was more influential on the school's GE orientation than its location in New York City: "It's not even New York— it's being located in our neighborhood. It's been one of the most diverse areas in the world for many years. Because of that ethnic diversity, it puts us at a different standpoint." Rather than providing students opportunities for international travel, RGEA teachers used their students to cultivate a greater sense of global awareness. Highlighting student diversity as an asset, however, may reinforce that students are different from the normative conception of students in the U.S.— namely, white, native English speakers who have grown up in the U.S. Similarly, it may encourage teachers to believe that student diversity inherently leads to multiple and critical perspectives in the classroom, but teachers still need to intentionally cultivate such an environment.

### **External Pressures and GE**

External pressures from community members and standardized curricula shaped how teachers perceived they could teach their version of GE, despite teachers and administrators at WPS and RGEA envisioning GE manifesting in various ways in their settings. These pressures stem from an increasingly neoliberal and accountability-driven education system in the U.S.

At WPS, competition with other independent schools vaulted global programming to a high-profile position in the school's marketing. According to the school's director, Jillian, the global program at WPS was "very well received" by parents. She described the program as being unique compared to other independent schools with a global focus because the global connections were more ingrained in the curriculum and had been in place for several years. Vincent mentioned that some of the school's trustees, whose children participated in the school's international travel programs, were particularly invested in GE.

Simultaneously, WPS faculty felt pressured by parents and other independent schools to offer a robust curriculum that would impress universities. Ivan shared that the presence of competitors was intrinsically related to curricular offerings, such as WPS's decision to include AP courses. Additionally, students often selected AP courses over the World Perspectives program for a more competitive college application. Thus, while parents and students may have committed to WPS because of its global program, they retreated from their initial excitement when college acceptance became their primary concern.

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At RGEA, required state content exams created pressure that conflicted with GE teaching and learning. The current educational system requires teachers to manage the pressure of state exams while their professional judgment is increasingly undermined. This offers a unique set of challenges for educators intent on developing GE, even in a situation where there were factors to promote it. Teachers at RGEA said that the system and structure of school promoted extreme isolation of content and severe constraints on time. The end result of this condition was that class time mostly consisted of forms of direct instruction, or lectures, with little time devoted to discussion, inquiry, and projects designed to promote student engagement in course material often encouraged in GE (Gaudelli, 2003).

Despite the fact that the school gave teachers autonomy to incorporate an array of content into curriculum, teachers were constrained by standardized tests and pressure to prepare students for these tests. These struggles were identified in teachers' interviews. For instance, Gabriela offered the following:

There's a lot of emphasis on test prep and a lot of stress and anxiety around the Regents Exams, which narrows the scope of teaching and learning significantly. There's a lot more direct teaching than time to actually develop critical thinking and voice.

Within the restrictions of the current educational climate, teachers tried to create a balance in which students developed their global-oriented attitudes while engaging in preparation for the exams, as revealed by their practice of GE.

### **Divergent GE Practices**

The practice of GE combines both conceptions of GE and external pressures at each school. Both schools addressed the external pressures by offering programs within the school day in addition to their traditional global social studies courses and used in extracurricular activities to promote global learning. While WPS and RGEA tackled GE through their practice and implementation, their approaches varied depending on their external pressures and how they defined GE for their school communities.

At WPS, the attention to college preparation resulted in instructional practices that mirrored university activities. In numerous classroom observations, students sat at their desks in a circle with the teacher, suggesting a Socratic seminar structure to classes. Additionally, the kinds of work students completed to demonstrate their global learning seemed reminiscent of college-level research. For example, on Global Day, students presented their research around a topic

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with an international dimension, namely, a topic involving another country, suggesting an approach to GE that was “over there” rather than local and everywhere (Gaudelli, 2016). Between presentations, the coordinators of Global Day had organized guest speakers from different countries, and students ate their lunch productively, listening to one invited speaker. WPS students could also follow a particular “concentration” or track through high school similar to a college major or minor including a global track or other topics such as sustainability and STEAM. The consistent effort by teachers to create opportunities for college-like experiences suggests that college preparation was of paramount importance for parents as well as teachers.

Outside of the classroom, WPS offered numerous international travel programs designed to cultivate cross-cultural learning. Both middle school and high school students were invited to participate while some elementary teachers joined trips in order to enhance their teaching of global topics. Vincent explained that a kindergarten teacher traveled to Kenya and spent “one month with a Masai village and then came back with a wealth of materials to explore differences in culture between a life of a child in the Masai community and the life of a child here.” The travel programs were designed for students to understand diverse perspectives that may not be as evident to students during their family travel abroad. Teachers described these programs enthusiastically and noted how they were possible because of students’ affluence.

RGEA similarly expanded its curricular offerings and extracurricular activities. The administration and teachers decided to implement new courses—namely, Global Studies and Global Explorations—to improve student engagement and raise scores while fostering a global perspective, in response to low scores in world history on the Regents exams. RGEA responded to students’ below average aggregate performance by providing an enriched infusion of content for their students in addition to social studies classes. Rory, an administrator, felt the “content [of the exam] is so massive that teaching it within two years does a better service to our kids and we get to do things like the Global Explorations.” This content-intensive program evolved into the various courses of Global Explorations, including apartheid in South Africa, world conflicts, Iranian and Chinese Cultural Revolution, and global climate change. In an informal conversation, Lindsey mentioned that students could use the information they learned in her Global Explorations on the essay portion of the Regents exam.

Additionally, RGEA offered an abundance of extracurricular offerings for students. These were opportunities for teachers to engage students in global learning outside of the regularly-held classes with limited global content given their prescribed curricula for the Regents exams. Teachers frequently cited examples of these extracurricular programs rather than their own

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classroom practice when asked for examples of GE. These numerous initiatives included Fighting for Equality Day, a leadership program, a global humanities program, Global Explorations, a rooftop garden, and a project involving a local ecosystem. While these numerous extracurricular options allowed students to think about and take action on global issues in their local community, illustrative of the pedagogical intention to draw critical perspectives into GE (Andreotti, 2010, 2014), they demonstrate how RGEA teachers first concentrated on how to teach the mandated curriculum and then considered GE as an add-on. They also reflect Apple's (1986) concern of adding responsibilities for teachers rather than recognizing that schooling may need to be reconfigured entirely for meaningful GE.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

WPS and RGEA's distinct enactments of GE reveal the extent of teachers and administrators' agency within neoliberal frames—while teachers at both schools were pressured to ensure students' satisfactory performance, they devised opportunities for GE that varied in their criticality. Though saddled with prescribed curricula and high-stakes testing, RGEA engaged GE to support students through these requirements and prepare them for critical social action in the world (Andreotti, 2014). RGEA was community-focused in its efforts, seeing the extraordinarily diverse community as a significant asset in executing their strategy and recognizing how the local is not separate from the global (Gaudelli, 2016). Select teachers at RGEA, such as Jorge, fervently incorporated marginalized perspectives into their teaching to challenge the Eurocentric curricula, heeding Merryfield and Subedi's (2001) call for contrapuntal narratives.

While WPS enacted means that were less community-focused and more academically oriented, teachers and administrators grappled with students' privilege and offered students experiences that began the work of removing students' blinders around issues of inequity (Merryfield & Subedi, 2001). Although further disruption of the privileges involved in students' affluence and ability to travel may be more congruent with tenets of critical GE (Andreotti, 2014), this effort was well-received by students, evidenced by the popularity of the programs, and therefore possibly an effective means of expanding students' worldviews.

Despite these moments of thoughtful GE engagement, pressures normalized in the neoliberal era largely eclipsed teachers and administrators' efforts towards critical GE at both schools, though the constraints manifested differently. RGEA was compelled to prepare students, particularly secondary students, for state-level evaluations that measure student progress and thereby school performance, whereas WPS was a tuition-dependent institution that relied upon a steady

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flow of prospective families to support the school, requiring that their curricular and co-curricular offerings were attractive in comparison to their private school peer group. RGEA had to account for student/school performance as measured by external tests and metrics while WPS was compelled to appeal to demanding parents who may not necessarily see the value in GE over university preparation. Lastly, the pedagogical orientations of the schools diverged. The market forces of the wider system are evident in both of these cases, although they appeared differently in those contexts. At RGEA, teachers attempted to reorient existing curriculum to infuse global learning to meet the expectations for state testing while promoting a global view of topics such as world history. They designed a push-in program to inquire more deeply into global topics across age groups and created an annual two-week activity with this focus. At WPS, they similarly created a push-in learning opportunity through the academic conference, though this was more hierarchical in that only certain students created/presented projects while others were audience members. Both moves suggest to some degree what Apple (1986) has called *intensification*, or adding more to teachers' workloads to the extent that they cannot perform many of their tasks well at all. Both schools attempted to conceptualize and enact GE in ways that build on existing curriculum while providing additional learning venues within and beyond school for those purposes. They saw students, parents, and community-members as a strength of developing GE and looked for formal and informal means of incorporating the community of stakeholders. These similarities and differences suggest that enacting a GE as espoused by GE scholars (e.g., Gaudelli, 2003, 2016) necessitates adaptation and, at times, less criticality in order to mitigate other demands on teachers and administrators.

Based on our analysis of GE implementation and practice at WPS and RGEA, we offer recommendations for practitioners and researchers, not as a means of undermining their efforts but rather as acknowledging the difficult terrain that is the neoliberal educational landscape. For practitioners, neoliberalism can become an important component of a critical GE curriculum. Instead of allowing it to be a force silently shaping schooling, teachers could engage students in conversations about how neoliberalism is increasingly affecting their lives and becoming common sense (Wilson, 2018). Gaudelli (2013) recommends having students and teachers consider how standardized tests have become evidence of teacher effectiveness as well as how these tests are a means of comparing schools internationally and nations themselves. Such practices reflect tenets of critical GE by encouraging students to recognize the economic motivations of policymakers that reinforce rather than disrupt the nation-state system. Administrators advocating for increased GE should be mindful of adding GE components if this means that teachers' workload will increase without other responsibilities and tasks being

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removed, per Apple's (1986) caution of the dangers of intensification. Both WPS and RGEA understood GE as an add-on to the traditional curriculum, but it is important to explore what this means for teachers as well as students who are increasingly bombarded with extracurricular activities to strengthen their college applications. Based on our study, integrating GE into the foundation of curriculum and school culture continues to be a challenge for administrators and teachers.

Finally, we recommend that GE scholars further examine the implications of neoliberalism on critical GE theory and practice. Other areas of education such as education policy and teacher education have more fully analyzed the consequences of neoliberalism, but this could be further explored in GE research. Given that neoliberalism is increasingly a global force, and arguably a new form of colonialism as it forces low-income countries to adopt its tenets to participate in the global economy, this work would support critical GE scholars' aim to understand how power moves globally, producing inequities. This could involve further theorizing on neoliberalism and critical GE or studying critical GE in schools in other countries where neoliberalism is not the only dominant discourse, unlike in the U.S. Such research would contribute not only to the literature on critical GE but also help illuminate how and why we educate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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